

5910

2009-2010 Regular Sessions

I N S E N A T E

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Introduced by Sens. ONORATO, SAMPSON -- read twice and ordered printed,  
and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Rules

AN ACT to amend the general obligations law, in relation to powers of attorney for financial estate planning; and directing the law revision commission to study the implementation of such powers of attorney

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. Subdivision 3 of section 5-1511 of the general obligations  
2 law, as added by chapter 644 of the laws of 2008, is amended to read as  
3 follows:

4 3. A principal may revoke a power of attorney;

5 (a) in accordance with the terms of the power of attorney; OR

6 (b) by delivering a written[, signed and dated] revocation of the  
7 power of attorney [as follows:

8 (1)] to the agent, and the agent must comply with the principal's  
9 revocation notwithstanding the actual or perceived incapacity of the  
10 principal unless the principal is subject to a guardianship under arti-  
11 cle eighty-one of the mental hygiene law[; and

12 (2) to any third party that the principal has reason to believe has  
13 received, retained or acted upon, the power of attorney].

14 S 2. Subdivision 6 of section 5-1511 of the general obligations law,  
15 as added by chapter 644 of the laws of 2008, is amended to read as  
16 follows:

17 6. [Unless the principal expressly provides otherwise, the execution  
18 of a power of attorney revokes any and all prior powers of attorney  
19 executed by the principal] THE EXECUTION OF A POWER OF ATTORNEY DOES NOT  
20 REVOKE ANY POWER OF ATTORNEY PREVIOUSLY EXECUTED BY THE PRINCIPAL UNLESS  
21 THE PRINCIPAL GIVES WRITTEN NOTICE OF REVOCATION TO THE AGENT OF THE  
22 PREVIOUSLY EXECUTED POWER OF ATTORNEY BEING REVOKED.

EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets  
[ ] is old law to be omitted.

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1 S 3. Paragraph (e) of subdivision 1 of section 5-1513 of the general  
2 obligations law, as added by chapter 644 of the laws of 2008, is amended  
3 to read as follows:

4 (e) This POWER OF ATTORNEY [REVOKES] DOES NOT REVOKE any [and all  
5 prior] Powers of Attorney PREVIOUSLY executed by me unless I [have stat-  
6 ed otherwise below, under "Modifications."] GIVE WRITTEN NOTICE OF REVO-  
7 CATION TO THE AGENT OF ANY PREVIOUSLY EXECUTED POWER OF ATTORNEY.

8 IF YOU ARE REVOKING A PREVIOUSLY EXECUTED POWER OF ATTORNEY, YOU  
9 SHOULD NOTIFY IN WRITING ANY THIRD PARTIES YOU BELIEVE HAVE RECEIVED,  
10 RETAINED OR ACTED ON THE POWER OF ATTORNEY YOU WANT TO REVOKE.

11 If [your are NOT revoking] YOU DO NOT INTEND TO REVOKE your prior  
12 Powers of Attorney, and if you [are granting] HAVE GRANTED the same  
13 authority in [two or more Powers of Attorney, you must also] THIS POWER  
14 OF ATTORNEY AS YOU GRANTED TO ANOTHER AGENT IN A PRIOR POWER OF ATTOR-  
15 NEY, EACH AGENT CAN ACT SEPARATELY UNLESS YOU indicate under "Modifica-  
16 tions" [whether] THAT the agents given these powers are to act together  
17 [or separately].

18 S 4. Subdivisions 10 and 14 of section 5-1501 of the general obli-  
19 gations law, as added by chapter 644 of the laws of 2008, are amended to  
20 read as follows:

21 10. "Power of attorney" means a written document, OTHER THAN A DOCU-  
22 MENT REQUIRED BY A GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY, by which a principal with  
23 capacity designates an agent to act on his or her behalf.

24 14. "Statutory major gifts rider" or "SMGR" means a document by which  
25 the principal may supplement a statutory short form power of attorney to  
26 authorize [major] ALL gift transactions and other transfers, [that  
27 meets] OTHER THAN THOSE PERMITTED BY SUBDIVISION FOURTEEN OF SECTION  
28 5-1502I OF THIS TITLE. THE DOCUMENT MUST MEET the requirements of subdi-  
29 vision nine of section 5-1514 of this title, and [that contains] CONTAIN  
30 the exact wording of the form set forth in subdivision ten of section  
31 5-1514 of this title. The use of the form set forth in subdivision ten  
32 of section 5-1514 of this title is lawful and when used, it shall be  
33 construed as a statutory major gifts rider. A statutory major gifts  
34 rider may contain modifications or additions as provided in section  
35 5-1503 of this title as such modifications or additions relate to major  
36 gift transactions and other transfers. The statutory major gifts rider  
37 must be executed in the manner provided in section 5-1514 of this title,  
38 simultaneously with the statutory short form power of attorney in which  
39 the authority (SMGR) is initialed by the principal. A statutory major  
40 gifts rider and the statutory short form power of attorney it supple-  
41 ments must be read together as a single instrument.

42 S 5. Clause (I) of subparagraph 2 of paragraph (f) of subdivision 1 of  
43 section 5-1513 of the general obligations law, as added by chapter 644  
44 of the laws of 2008, is amended to read as follows:

45 ( ) (I) personal and family maintenance. IF YOU GRANT YOUR AGENT  
46 THIS AUTHORITY, IT WILL ALLOW THE AGENT TO MAKE GIFTS THAT  
47 YOU CUSTOMARILY HAVE MADE TO INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING THE  
48 AGENT, AND CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS. THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF ALL  
49 SUCH GIFTS IN ANY ONE CALENDAR YEAR CANNOT EXCEED \$500;

50 S 6. Paragraphs (h) and (n) of subdivision 1 of section 5-1513 of the  
51 general obligations law, as added by chapter 644 of the laws of 2008,  
52 are amended to read as follows:

53 (h) MAJOR GIFTS AND OTHER TRANSFERS: STATUTORY MAJOR GIFTS RIDER  
54 (OPTIONAL)

55 In order to authorize your agent to make [major] gifts IN EXCESS OF AN  
56 ANNUAL TOTAL OF \$500 FOR ALL GIFTS DESCRIBED IN (I) OF THE GRANT OF

1 AUTHORITY SECTION OF THIS DOCUMENT (UNDER PERSONAL AND FAMILY MAINTENANCE), and other transfers of your property, you must initial the  
2 statement below and execute a Statutory Major Gifts Rider at the same  
3 time as this instrument. Initialing the statement below by itself does  
4 not authorize your agent to make major gifts and other transfers. The  
5 preparation of the Statutory Major Gifts Rider should be supervised by a  
6 lawyer.  
7

8 ( ) (SMGR) I grant my agent authority to make major gifts and  
9 other transfers of my property, in accordance with the terms and conditions  
10 of the Statutory Major Gifts Rider that supplements this Power of  
11 Attorney.

12 (n) IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THE AGENT:

13 When you accept the authority granted under this Power of Attorney, a  
14 special legal relationship is created between you and the principal.  
15 This relationship imposes on you legal responsibilities that continue  
16 until you resign or the Power of Attorney is terminated or revoked. You  
17 must:

18 (1) act according to any instructions from the principal, or, where  
19 there are no instructions, in the principal's best interest;

20 (2) avoid conflicts that would impair your ability to act in the principal's  
21 best interest;

22 (3) keep the principal's property separate and distinct from any  
23 assets you own or control, unless otherwise permitted by law;

24 (4) keep a record of all receipts, payments, and transactions  
25 conducted for the principal; and

26 (5) disclose your identity as an agent whenever you act for the principal  
27 by writing or printing the principal's name and signing your own  
28 name as "agent" in either of the following manner: (Principal's Name) by  
29 (Your Signature) as Agent, or (your signature) as Agent for (Principal's  
30 Name).

31 You may not use the principal's assets to benefit yourself OR ANYONE  
32 ELSE or [give major] MAKE gifts to yourself or anyone else unless the  
33 principal has specifically granted you that authority in this Power of  
34 Attorney [or] AND in a Statutory Major Gifts Rider attached to this  
35 Power of Attorney, OR IN A NON-STATUTORY POWER OF ATTORNEY. If you have  
36 that authority, you must act according to any instructions of the principal  
37 or, where there are no such instructions, in the principal's best  
38 interest. You may resign by giving written notice to the principal and  
39 to any co-agent, successor agent, monitor if one has been named in this  
40 document, or the principal's guardian if one has been appointed. If  
41 there is anything about this document or your responsibilities that you  
42 do not understand, you should seek legal advice.

43 Liability of agent:

44 The meaning of the authority given to you is defined in New York's  
45 General Obligations Law, Article 5, Title 15. If it is found that you  
46 have violated the law or acted outside the authority granted to you in  
47 the Power of Attorney, you may be liable under the law for your  
48 violation.

49 S 7. Subdivision 10 of section 5-1514 of the general obligations law,  
50 as added by chapter 644 of the laws of 2008, is amended to read as  
51 follows:

52 10. The use of the following shall be construed as the "Statutory  
53 Major Gifts Rider" for a statutory short form power of attorney:

54 "POWER OF ATTORNEY

55 NEW YORK STATUTORY MAJOR GIFTS RIDER

## 1 AUTHORIZATION TO MAKE MAJOR GIFTS OR OTHER TRANSFERS

2 CAUTION TO THE PRINCIPAL: This OPTIONAL rider allows you to authorize  
3 your agent to make [major] gifts IN EXCESS OF AN ANNUAL TOTAL OF \$500  
4 FOR ALL GIFTS DESCRIBED IN (I) OF THE GRANT OF AUTHORITY SECTION OF THE  
5 STATUTORY SHORT FORM POWER OF ATTORNEY (UNDER PERSONAL AND FAMILY MAIN-  
6 TENANCE), or other transfers of your money or other property during your  
7 lifetime. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO EXECUTE THIS RIDER IF YOU ONLY WANT YOUR  
8 AGENT TO MAKE GIFTS DESCRIBED IN (I) OF THE GRANT OF AUTHORITY SECTION  
9 OF THE STATUTORY SHORT FORM POWER OF ATTORNEY AND YOU INITIALED "(I)" ON  
10 THAT SECTION OF THAT FORM. Granting any of the following authority to  
11 your agent gives your agent the authority to take actions which could  
12 significantly reduce your property or change how your property is  
13 distributed at your death. "Major gifts or other transfers" are  
14 described in section 5-1514 of the General Obligations Law. This Major  
15 Gifts Rider does not require your agent to exercise granted authority,  
16 but when he or she exercises this authority, he or she must act accord-  
17 ing to any instructions you provide, or otherwise in your best interest.

18 This Major Gifts Rider and the Power of Attorney it supplements must  
19 be read together as a single instrument.

20 Before signing this document authorizing your agent to make major  
21 gifts and other transfers, you should seek legal advice to ensure that  
22 your intentions are clearly and properly expressed.

## 23 (a) GRANT OF LIMITED AUTHORITY TO MAKE GIFTS

24 Granting gifting authority to your agent gives your agent the authori-  
25 ty to take actions which could significantly reduce your property.

26 If you wish to allow your agent to make gifts to himself or herself,  
27 you must separately grant that authority in subdivision (c) below.

28 To grant your agent the gifting authority provided below, initial the  
29 bracket to the left of the authority.

30 ( ) I grant authority to my agent to make gifts to my spouse, children  
31 and more remote descendants, and parents, not to exceed, for each donee,  
32 the annual federal gift tax exclusion amount pursuant to the Internal  
33 Revenue Code. For gifts to my children and more remote descendants, and  
34 parents, the maximum amount of the gift to each donee shall not exceed  
35 twice the gift tax exclusion amount, if my spouse agrees to split gift  
36 treatment pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code.

37 This authority must be exercised pursuant to my instructions, or other-  
38 wise for purposes which the agent reasonably deems to be in my best  
39 interest.

## 40 (b) MODIFICATIONS:

41 Use this section if you wish to authorize gifts in excess of the above  
42 amount, gifts to other beneficiaries or other types of transfers.

43 Granting such authority to your agent gives your agent the authority to  
44 take actions which could significantly reduce your property and/or  
45 change how your property is distributed at your death. If you wish to  
46 authorize your agent to make gifts or transfers to himself or herself,  
47 you must separately grant that authority in subdivision (c) below.

48 ( ) I grant the following authority to my agent to make gifts or trans-  
49 fers pursuant to my instructions, or otherwise for purposes which the  
50 agent reasonably deems to be in my best interest[.]:

51 (c) GRANT OF SPECIFIC AUTHORITY FOR AN AGENT TO MAKE MAJOR GIFTS OR  
52 OTHER TRANSFERS TO HIMSELF OR HERSELF: (OPTIONAL)

53 If you wish to authorize your agent to make gifts or transfers to  
54 himself or herself, you must grant that authority in this section, indi-  
55 cating to which agent(s) the authorization is granted, and any limita-  
56 tions and guidelines.



1 name(s) and address(es) of successor agent(s)  
2 Successor agents designated above must act together unless you initial  
3 the statement below.

4 ( ) My successor agents may act SEPARATELY.

5 S 11. Subparagraph 1 of paragraph (a) of subdivision 1 of section  
6 5-1504 of the general obligations law, as amended by chapter 644 of the  
7 laws of 2008, is amended to read as follows:

8 (1) the refusal by the agent to provide an original STATUTORY SHORT  
9 FORM power of attorney or a copy certified by an attorney pursuant to  
10 [rule] SECTION twenty-one hundred five of the civil practice law and  
11 rules, or by a court or other government entity;

12 S 12. Subparagraphs 1 and 2 of paragraph (b) of subdivision 1 of  
13 section 5-1504 of the general obligations law, as amended by chapter 644  
14 of the laws of 2008, are amended to read as follows:

15 (1) the STATUTORY SHORT FORM power of attorney is not on a form  
16 prescribed by the third party to whom the power of attorney is  
17 presented.

18 (2) there has been a lapse of time since the execution of the STATUTO-  
19 RY SHORT FORM power of attorney.

20 S 13. Subdivision 5 of section 5-1504 of the general obligations law,  
21 as added by chapter 644 of the laws of 2008, is amended to read as  
22 follows:

23 5. When the STATUTORY SHORT FORM power of attorney is presented to a  
24 third party, it shall not be deemed unreasonable for a third party to  
25 require the agent to execute an acknowledged affidavit pursuant to this  
26 subdivision stating that the STATUTORY SHORT FORM power of attorney is  
27 in full force and effect. Such an affidavit is conclusive proof to the  
28 third party relying on the power of attorney that the power of attorney  
29 is valid and effective, and has not been terminated [or], revoked OR  
30 MODIFIED, except as to any third party who had actual notice that the  
31 STATUTORY SHORT FORM power of attorney had terminated [or], been revoked  
32 OR BEEN MODIFIED prior to the execution of the affidavit. Such affidavit  
33 shall state that:

34 (a) the agent does not have, at the time of the transaction, actual  
35 notice of the termination or revocation of the STATUTORY SHORT FORM  
36 power of attorney, or notice of any facts indicating that the STATUTORY  
37 SHORT FORM power of attorney has been terminated or revoked;

38 (b) the agent does not have, at the time of the transaction, actual  
39 notice that the STATUTORY SHORT FORM power of attorney has been modified  
40 in any way that would affect the ability of the agent to authorize or  
41 engage in the transaction, or notice of any facts indicating that the  
42 STATUTORY SHORT FORM power of attorney has been so modified; and

43 (c) if the agent was named as a successor agent, the prior agent is no  
44 longer able or willing to serve.

45 S 14. Subdivision 4 of section 5-1501B of the general obligations law,  
46 as added by chapter 644 of the laws of 2008, is amended to read as  
47 follows:

48 4. Nothing in this title shall be construed to bar the use of any  
49 other or different form of power of attorney desired by a [person other  
50 than an individual as the term person is defined in section 5-1501 of  
51 this title] PRINCIPAL WHO IS NOT AN INDIVIDUAL.

52 S 15. The law revision commission shall, over a period of two years,  
53 study all aspects of the implementation of title 15 of article 5 of the  
54 general obligations law, as amended by chapter 644 of the laws of 2008  
55 and this act. Such commission shall consult with individuals and enti-

1 ties regularly engaged in the utilization of such title, and those indi-  
2 viduals and entities affected by the provisions of such title.

3 The law revision commission shall, on or before the first of January  
4 of the third calendar year commencing after the effective date of this  
5 section, submit a report of its findings, conclusions and recommenda-  
6 tions to the governor and the legislature.

7 S 16. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same  
8 manner as chapter 644 of the laws of 2008, as amended, takes effect.