STATE OF NEW YORK

7914

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

April 11, 2025

Introduced by M. of A. SLATER -- read once and referred to the Committee on Governmental Operations

AN ACT in relation to establishing a commission to investigate foreign influence on governmental employees and elections; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. There is hereby established a commission to investigate foreign influence on governmental employees and elections, hereinafter referred to as "the commission". Such commission shall consist of 25 members to be appointed as follows: five members appointed by the governor; five members appointed by the speaker of the assembly; five members appointed by the temporary president of the senate; five members appointed by the minority leader of the assembly; and five members appointed by the minority leader of the senate. The commission shall elect from its appointed members a chairperson or chairpersons by a majority vote of the total number of members of the commission. Such chairperson or chairpersons shall preside over all commission meetings and shall have the power to schedule meetings of the commission as such chairperson or chairpersons deem necessary for the proper execution of its duties.

§ 2. The commission shall:

(a) Investigate weaknesses in existing laws, regulations and procedures relating to the regulation of lobbying, including but not limited to examining compliance by organizations and other persons engaged in lobbying and other attempts to influence public policies or elections, including foreign entities, with the requirements of existing state laws administered by the commission on ethics and lobbying in government, and the sufficiency of such requirements; and make recommendations to reform any weaknesses uncovered in such laws, regulations and procedures.

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

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(b) Investigate weaknesses in existing laws, regulations and procedures relating to addressing public corruption, conflicts of interest, and ethics in state government, including but not limited to, criminal laws protecting against abuses of the public trust; and make recommendations to reform any weaknesses uncovered in such laws, regulations and procedures.

(c) Investigate weaknesses in existing laws, regulations, and procedures relating to governmental employees acting on behalf of a foreign entity, or nation; and make recommendations to reform any weaknesses uncovered in such laws, regulations and procedures.

(d) Investigate weaknesses in existing laws, regulations and procedures relating to addressing the influence of foreign entities on elected officials, state employees, and election campaigns; and make recommendations to reform any weaknesses uncovered in such laws, regulations and procedures.

(e) Conduct public hearings around the state to provide opportunities for members of the public and interested parties to comment on the issues and the scope of its work.

§ 3. Pursuant to subdivision 8 of section 63 of the executive law, the governor shall direct that the attorney general inquire into the matters set forth in this act, that involve public peace, public safety, and public justice, and request that the attorney general do so by appointing those of the appointed commissioners who are attorneys as deputy attorneys general and delegating to such deputy attorneys general the authority to exercise the investigative powers that are provided for in an investigation pursuant to such subdivision.

§ 4. Members of the commission shall have all the powers and authority that may be given or granted to persons appointed under authority of section 6 and subdivision 8 of section 63 of the executive law, including, but not limited to, the powers to subpoena and enforce the attendance of individual witnesses, both public and private, to administer oaths and examine witnesses under oath, and to require the production of any books or papers deemed relevant or material; provided, however, that (a) the chairperson or chairpersons of the commission shall unanimously approve any subpoena prior to its issuance; and (b) the chairperson or chairpersons of the commission shall unanimously approve such procedures and rules as they believe necessary to govern the exercise of the powers and authority given or granted to the members of the commission pursuant to section 6 and subdivision 8 of section 63 of the executive law, including rules designed to provide transparency while protecting the integrity of the investigation and rights to privacy.

§ 5. If in the course of its inquiry, the commission obtains evidence of a violation of existing laws, such evidence shall be communicated to the office of the attorney general and other appropriate law enforcement authorities, and the commission shall take steps to facilitate jurisdictional referrals where appropriate. The superintendent of the division of state police shall, as appropriate, authorize the attorney general, pursuant to the provisions of subdivision 3 of section 63 of the executive law, to conduct an investigation of any indictable offense or offenses arising out of any activity that is the subject of an inquiry by the commission, and to prosecute the person or persons believed to have committed the same and any crime or offense uncovered by such investigation or prosecution or both, including but not limited to, appearing before and presenting all such matters to a grand jury. The commission shall cooperate with prosecutorial agencies to avoid jeopardizing ongoing investigations and prosecutions.

§ 6. Every department, board, bureau, and commission of the state, including but not limited to state agencies, shall provide to the commission every assistance and cooperation, including use of state facilities, which may be necessary or desirable for the accomplishment of the duties or purposes of this section.

§ 7. The commission shall issue a preliminary policy report on or before May 1, 2026, setting forth its initial findings and making such recommendations as required by this act for the express purpose of consideration and enactment of statutory reforms by the governor and the legislature in the 2026 legislative session. On or before May 1, 2027, the commission shall make a final policy report to the governor and the legislature of its findings and recommendations. All such reports must be approved by a majority of the members of the commission.

§ 8. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire and be deemed repealed 6 months after the submission of the final report by the commission to investigate foreign influence on governmental employees and elections pursuant to section seven of this act; provided, however, that a chairperson of the commission to investigate foreign influence on governmental employees and elections shall notify the legislative bill drafting commission upon the occurrence of the submission of the final report by such commission pursuant to section seven of this act in order that the commission may maintain an accurate and timely effective data base of the official text of the laws of the state of New York in furtherance of effectuating the provisions of section 44 of the legislative law and section 70-b of the public officers law.