

STATE OF NEW YORK

8591

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

November 26, 2025

Introduced by Sen. ASHBY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Rules

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:

1 Section 1. There is hereby established a commission to investigate
2 foreign influence on governmental employees and elections, hereinafter
3 referred to as "the commission". Such commission shall consist of 25
4 members to be appointed as follows: five members appointed by the gover-
5 nor; five members appointed by the speaker of the assembly; five members
6 appointed by the temporary president of the senate; five members
7 appointed by the minority leader of the assembly; and five members
8 appointed by the minority leader of the senate. The commission shall
9 elect from its appointed members a chairperson or chairpersons by a
10 majority vote of the total number of members of the commission. Such
11 chairperson or chairpersons shall preside over all commission meetings
12 and shall have the power to schedule meetings of the commission as such
13 chairperson or chairpersons deem necessary for the proper execution of
14 its duties.

15 § 2. The commission shall:

16 (a) Investigate weaknesses in existing laws, regulations and proce-
17 dures relating to the regulation of lobbying, including but not limited
18 to examining compliance by organizations and other persons engaged in
19 lobbying and other attempts to influence public policies or elections,
20 including foreign entities, with the requirements of existing state laws
21 administered by the commission on ethics and lobbying in government, and
22 the sufficiency of such requirements; and make recommendations to reform
23 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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1 (b) Investigate weaknesses in existing laws, regulations and proce-
2 dures relating to addressing public corruption, conflicts of interest,
3 and ethics in state government, including but not limited to, criminal
4 laws protecting against abuses of the public trust; and make recommenda-
5 tions to reform any weaknesses uncovered in such laws, regulations and
6 procedures.

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

11 (d) Investigate weaknesses in existing laws, regulations and proce-
12 dures relating to addressing the influence of foreign entities on
13 elected officials, state employees, and election campaigns; and make
14 recommendations to reform any weaknesses uncovered in such laws, regu-
15 lations and procedures.

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

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

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

42 § 5. If in the course of its inquiry, the commission obtains evidence
43 of a violation of existing laws, such evidence shall be communicated to
44 the office of the attorney general and other appropriate law enforcement
45 authorities, and the commission shall take steps to facilitate jurisdic-
46 tional referrals where appropriate. The superintendent of the division
47 of state police shall, as appropriate, authorize the attorney general,
48 pursuant to the provisions of subdivision 3 of section 63 of the execu-
49 tive law, to conduct an investigation of any indictable offense or
50 offenses arising out of any activity that is the subject of an inquiry
51 by the commission, and to prosecute the person or persons believed to
52 have committed the same and any crime or offense uncovered by such
53 investigation or prosecution or both, including but not limited to,
54 appearing before and presenting all such matters to a grand jury. The
55 commission shall cooperate with prosecutorial agencies to avoid jeopard-
56 izing ongoing investigations and prosecutions.

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

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

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