

Independent Senate Dems Seal Deal with Republican Conference

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Sens. Jeff Klein and and Dean Skelos will share the role of Senate president rotating the title every two weeks under a power sharing agreement between the Independent Democratic Conference and the Republican conference.

Democrats look to be on the cusp of winning enough seats to control the chamber but Sens. Simcha Felder and Malcolm Smith both bolted the conference.

Felder is conferencing with the Republicans and [Smith joined the IDC](#) .

Smith is the only member of color of the five-member IDC. It seems the IDC will have to function as the voice for New York City as Klein, Savino and Smith hail from the five boroughs. The Republican conference has three members from the city but are a body predeominantly made up by legisaltors from upstate and Long Island.

The full nitty gritty of Senate operations have yet to be made public, but a press release from the IDC gives us a hint of how things will function:

Under the unprecedented agreement, the Independent Democratic Conference will be formally recognized as a third, permanent Senate conference. Senator Klein and Senator Skelos will assume the roles of Conference Leader for their respective conferences and will administer joint and equal authority over (1) the daily senate agenda (a/k/a the ‘Active List,’ which lays out which bills will be voted on each day), (2) the state budget, (3) appointments to state and local boards, and (4) leadership and committee assignments for their respective conferences. Under the agreement, coalition leaders will need to work together to lead the Senate forward. The new agreement will also provide for a process by which the title of Temporary President will alternate between the two conference leaders every two weeks. Therefore, the role of the temporary

resident will be constitutionally fulfilled at all times.

Here are the statements from Skelos and Klein:

The Senate Republican Conference has worked closely with the Independent Democratic Conference and Governor Cuomo to bring historic progress to New York. Weâ€™ve brought spending under control, ended Albany dysfunction, and consistently delivered the bipartisan results New Yorkers need and deserve -- even on many of the most difficult issues. Senator Klein has proven to be a thoughtful and effective leader, and I look forward to partnering with him to move this state forward. â€” Skelos

Over the past two years, members of the IDC and Senate Republicans have shown that the best way to overcome New Yorkâ€™s biggest challenges is by working in a constructive, bipartisan way. Legislating is a deliberative, cooperative processâ€”not a spectator sport. Having dedicated the past two years to a serious, policy-driven agenda, this agreement delivers on the IDCâ€™s pledge to become a permanent third conference within the State Senate and to have a major voice in all policy decisions moving forward. Having worked together over the past two years, I know that Senator Skelos is not only an effective leader, but is as committed as I am to delivering major bipartisan results for all New Yorkers. â€” Klein

And here's a statement from Senate Democratic spokesman Mike Murphy:

Senate Democrats issued a statement saying that the Republicans are in the midst of initiating another Senate coup and have subverted the will of the people. This is not a coalition but a coup against all New Yorkers who voted for Democratic control of the Senate and a progressive state government. Sadly, the real victims of todayâ€™s announcement are the people of our State, whose clearly expressed desire for progress on a host of issues will now be scuttled. Senate Democrats will remain fierce advocates for them and the issues New Yorkers want to see implemented like standing up for womenâ€™s health, passing real campaign finance reform, raising the minimum wage and enacting common sense gun laws.

The Independent Democratic Conference. Picture from the office of Sen. Jeff Klein. □

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