

Cuomo's First Salvo Against Public Corruption

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Gov. Andrew Cuomo fired the first salvo today in what he says will be an ongoing campaign against public corruption.

Cuomo was joined by a number of county district attorneys at a press conference at his Manhattan office today where he announced a push to create a "Public Trust Act" that would increase penalties for existing public corruption laws and establish three new criminal acts: bribing a public official, scheming to corrupt the government and failing to report corruption.

Legislators convicted of corruption charges would be banned from holding office and would not be able to do business with the state.

"The public expects honesty," Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance said at the press conference, "and it's time our laws caught up with reality."

Asked by reporters why his proposal didn't include giving more power to the attorney general to investigate corruption, Cuomo said that today's announcement was "step one."

"We'll be looking at other areas going forward," said the governor, [who in recent days has faced criticism for not doing enough to protect public integrity. nbsp;](#)

It bears mentioning, however, that Cuomo has had an odd relationship with Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, who bested Richmond County District Attorney Dan Donovan for the position. The Republican district attorney was at the press conference touting the new laws; Schneiderman was not.

Cuomo says he also wants to address campaign finance reform.

Cuomo said he expects the Legislature to pass the Public Trust Act this year. "Legislatures often respond to what people want and I think over the last few weeks they have gotten a lot of information about corruption," Cuomo said. But he added that he hasn't gone over his reform agenda with state lawmakers.

Two unrelated corruption cases against state lawmakers were made public last week. Both were brought by U.S. attorney Preet Bharara, who has owned legislative corruption cases in Albany as state and local officials moved slowly to react.

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