Savino Blames Squadron For Lack of Action on Gender Expression Legislation *Updated*

Posted on Jun 12, Posted by David Howard King Category State

Sen. Diane Savino may be getting tired of advocates pressuring her and other members of the Independent Democratic Conference to move progressive peices of legislation through the Senate.

Savino told advocate Bryan John Ellicott in an exchange on Facebook, that it wasn't her fault that the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act has not come to a vote, instead casting blame for the delay on fellow Democrat state Sen. Daniel Squadron for being too busy running for Public Advocate to tend to his legislation.

Savino told the Facebook poster : "You already ave my vote, but maybe you should speak to the sponsor of the bill, Dan Squadron. I know he is busy running for another office, but it is his bill and he needs to move it. Legislating does not mean introducing a bill and then doing nothing. I have a full agenda of my bills and I don't leave them to anyone else"

Savino and her IDC colleagues have faced pressure to move progressive legislation since forming a governing coalition with Senate Republicans last year.

"We all have to make sure we have the votes. It is part of our job," Savino said.

"Sometimes you get testy when people tell you it is your job to move a bill. It is really busy right now and I have lots of my own legislation to move. Sometimes people react in ways that don't really relfect how they feel," Savino told the Gazette.

Savino told the advocate that Squadron must prove there are enough votes for passage of a bill before it comes up for a vote. "you need to have the votes declared to move it," she said.

There is nothing in the Senate rules that says a bill must be gauraneed passage for it to come to a vote.

Squadron has held a number of events and rallies in support of GENDA and The New York Times editorialized in favor of the legislation today while mentioning Squadron's efforts to pass the bill. Squadron's office declined to comment on Savino's statements.

Savino has been the target of much lobbying on a number of different pieces of legislation because she and her boyfirend Sen. Jeff Klein. are key members of the Independent Democratic Conference and Klein shares the ability to decide which bills come to a vote with Republican Leader Dean Skelos.

Savino says she supports GENDA but that she isn't sure the votes exist to pass the bill this year.

Interestingly enough, Savino is the Senate sponsor of the Sensible Opportunity for Legislative Equality Act that would allow each legislator to bring one bill to a vote in a two-year session regardless of what leaders have to say as long as the bill has made it through committee.

SOLE may seem surprisingly straightforward, or even underwhelming, to those unfamiliar with Albany. But the act isn't any sort of guarantee rank-and-file legislators will get even one of their bills to a vote in two years as legisaltion can be held up in committee.

"It is a very distinct possibility that SOLE could help move legislation like GENDA, in instances like this," Savino said.

Savino says she doesn't think SOLE has a chance of passing the legislature this year but says it will percolate. "Legislating is hard sometimes," said Savino.

Here is the Facebook exchange:

Bryan John Ellicott:

even if you don't live in the district call Diane J. Savino and Jeffrey Klein and make them know how you feel about GENDA...think of all the young people who haven't come out yet because they are scared. Yes, NYC has GENDA like provisions but they aren't enforced.

Diane J. Savino:

You already ave my vote, but maybe you should speak to the sponsor of the bill, Dan Squadron. I know he is busy running for another office, but it is his bill and he needs to move it. Legislating does not mean introducing a bill and then doing nothing. I have a full agenda of my bills and I don't leave them to anyone else.

Bryan John Ellicott:

Diane, you have the ability to move this bill out committee all by yourself and with the other members of the IDC. Daniel Squadron and I we talk often. He can't do that with Skelos or the IDC. You are no longer just the Senator from the Staten Island you gave that up when you broke off from the Dems. You have the chance to make the lives of transgender people and especially transgender youth better. What are you going to say to them when they don't get a vote for pride?Are you prepared for that? Don't say but we have GENDA provisions in NYC because they don't get enforced.

Diane J. Savino:

bryan, i wish thst were true, but it is not. if i had that kind of power i would have passed medical

marijuana already. you need to have the votes declared to move it.

-

Tags: Tagged in: Daniel Squadron Dean Skelos Diane Savino Jeff Klein