Senate Has Close Encounter With Campaign Finance Reform

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Despite failing to come to a deal on a campaign finance reform the state senate nearly voted on a bill that would have enacted a public financing campaign at around 10:20 tonight.

Senate Democrats introduced a hostile amendment to a bill crafted to allow the use of old-school lever voting machines in New York City's mayor primary and runoff elections this year.

Republicans ruled that the hostile amendment was not germane to the bill but Sen. Gustavo Rivera argued for it. The entire body took a vote on whether the amendment was germane.

The vote was 30 for the amendment--2 votes short of what were needed. All of the Independent Democratic Conference that has been chastised by advocates for not bringing campaign finance reform to a vote in the senate and most of the Democratic conference voted for the bill. Democratic Sens. Ruben Diaz and Malcolm Smith voted against the amendment. Sen. Simcha Felder who was elected as a Democrat but conferences with Senate Republicans also voted against the amendment.

Smith is under federal indictment for trying to bribe his way on to the Republican ballot for NYC mayor.

Senate Democrats issued a statement on the vote criticizing Senate Republicans for the failure of the amendment but the amendment could have passed if they had the support of just two more of their own members.

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