

Lawyers Alliance Advances Advocacy Goals

Lawyers Alliance works to advance public policy issues of importance to nonprofits serving New York City communities. We recently achieved two successes and seek your support for our ongoing campaign to remove obstacles to nonprofit advocacy.

In November 2021, Governor Hochul repealed a law requiring charitable nonprofits to file with the New York Department of State the same annual financial report that they already file with the New York Attorney General's Charities Bureau. The reports are publicly available on the web, so the requirement to file those reports with the Department of State would not have increased transparency.

Lawyers Alliance staff drafted the repeal bill, testified before the legislature, and worked with allies to persuade both houses of the legislature to pass the bill and the Governor to sign it. The importance of this work to the charitable sector is evident from the fact that more than 460 nonprofits joined us in asking the Governor to sign the bill.

In another recent victory, in December 2021 the New York Department of State removed misleading information from its website that made it appear as if charitable nonprofits were delinquent in required filings. The problem arose when the department launched a new, publicly available corporations database. A "next statement due date" field, likely intended for business corporations, contained fictitious dates often years in the past, even though charitable nonprofit corporations are not required to file annual reports with the Department of State.

Two weeks after we wrote to the department, the database was updated to remove the misleading dates and affirmatively acknowledge that state-ments are not required.

Lawyers Alliance is working with the **A Place at the Table** coalition to exempt nonprofits that engage in only a small amount of lobbying from the New York State and New York City lobbyist registration requirements. In New York, a nonprofit organization that spends just \$5,000 in a year lobbying must register as a lobbyist, even if it does not hire a professional lobbyist. Many nonprofits are surprised that the government defines their routine communications with the government as lobbying. Employees may be lobbying if they urge a City Council member to renew a discretionary funding grant to the organization, or if they help clients explain to their local elected officials why the legislature should increase the budget allocation for child care.

Daunted by the administrative burden associated with frequent lobbying filings, many nonprofits avoid speaking up for the communities they serve. S6398/A6943 would raise the lobbying expenditure threshold to \$10,000. Lawyers Alliance's data analysis shows this would still capture 99 percent of the lobbying dollars spent in the state, while removing the administrative burdens currently imposed on the many nonprofits that spend only a small amount on lobbying.

[Click here](#) to join our campaign to pass this bill.

Lawyers Alliance Staff

Laura Abel
Senior Policy Counsel

Veronica Aksu
Staff Attorney

Wilma Alexander
Office Administrator

Emily Barry
Cleary Extern/Staff Attorney

Ciarra Chavarria
Staff Attorney

Emily Crossan
Marketing and Communications Director

Junior Duplessis
Program Associate

Stacey O'Haire Fahey
Pro Bono Counsel

Dan Greenman
Director of Operations

Elizabeth M. Guggenheimer
Executive Director

Nissa Heman
Executive Assistant and Development Associate

Allison B. Kline
Director of Development

Judith Moldover
Senior Staff Attorney

Lori Moses
Senior Staff Attorney

Hedwig O'Hara
Legal Director

Aaron Perlson
Information Systems Manager

Gina Pujols-Johnson
Client Relations Associate

Anna Saum
Pro Bono Associate

Laura Israel Sinrod
Corporate Engagement Counsel

Laren E. Spirer
Special Counsel – Pro Bono Strategy

Rafi Stern
Staff Attorney

James Valentin
Development Manager

Elizabeth Wytock
Staff Attorney/Legal Fellow

Matthew B. Zisk
Volunteer Senior Counsel

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