

THE BOA COALITION

Supporting a Bipartisan Operating Agreement to End the Stalemate in the NY State Senate

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An open letter to the New York State Senate:

The coup that brought the State Senate to a grinding halt this month is threatening the health, safety, education and livelihoods of millions of New Yorkers. On June 30 important issues like 250,000 upstate jobs that rely upon the Power for Jobs program, billions of dollars in operating funds for local governments all over the state and mayoral control of the million-student New York City public school system are set to expire unless the Senate acts now. Many other issues critical to New Yorkers have also been put on hold.

The Senate is deadlocked at 31-31. The votes are equally divided, so the power must be as well. Regardless of parliamentary maneuvering, and outstanding legal questions, there is no way around the fact that 31 equals 31, and neither conference has the votes to conduct business without a fair operating agreement. The Senate Democratic Conference has proposed a reasonable bipartisan operating agreement, similar to those of other states when a legislative house has been evenly divided.

We call on both conferences to sign onto a bipartisan operating agreement for the extraordinary session immediately so that the Senate can resume operation and pass essential bills.

A longer term operating agreement will need to be reached, and the various proposals for mediation and arbitration may be helpful in achieving that goal, but that type of process cannot be completed in time to pass bills before June 30. We urge you to reach a temporary agreement for the extraordinary session immediately.

Signed (list in formation),

- 32BJ, SEIU
- Alliance for Quality Education
- Campaign for Fiscal Equity
- Citizen Action of New York
- Communication Workers of America District One
- Education Voters of New York
- Long Island Progressive Coalition
- Make The Road New York
- NARAL Pro-Choice New York
- National Organization for Women NYS
- NYC Coalition for Educational Justice
- New York Democratic Lawyers Council
- Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU)
- Tenants PAC
- United Auto Workers Region 9A
- United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 1500