



Joint Advisory Board on Broadcast of State Government Proceedings

Dear Temporary President of the Senate Malcolm Smith,
Speaker Sheldon Silver,
Minority Leader Dean Skelos,
Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb:

It is our pleasure to forward to you the initial report of the Joint Advisory Board on Broadcast of State Government Proceedings. The advisory board has met pursuant to Joint Rule IV to enhance the current Legislative TV Channel and provide more effective and informative programming about state government.

This report sets forth the goals of the advisory board to address the technical, logistical and organizational challenges of expanding the channel's coverage. The joint advisory board will immediately commence a series of public meetings to fulfill these goals.

At this time, we would like to thank the members of the advisory board for their contributions to date and express our commitment to expanding access to legislative proceedings to millions of New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

Senator Jose Serrano
Co-chair

Assembly Majority Leader Ron Canestrari
Co-chair

October 30, 2009

Joint Advisory Board on Broadcast of State Government Proceedings

Senator Jose Serrano
Co-chair

Assembly Majority Leader Ron Canestrari
Co-chair

Members of the Advisory Board

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Senator David Valesky
Senator John Bonacic

Assemblymember Darryl Towns
Assemblymember Margaret Markey
Assemblymember Jane Corwin

In 2009, The New York State Legislature adopted new Permanent Joint Rule IV of the permanent joint rules of the Senate and Assembly. Joint Rule IV created a joint advisory board to oversee current and future broadcasts of New York State government proceedings (SR2775/AR787).

This advisory board is directed to report to the Temporary President of the Senate, the Speaker of the Assembly, the Minority Leader of the Senate and the Minority leader of the Assembly on or before November 1, 2009 on the efficacy of current programming, the future expansion of this programming, and the broadcast or webcast of legislative committee meetings.

In January 2006, the Senate and Assembly, in collaboration with New York's Cable Television operators, launched a dedicated television channel that is available on virtually all of the state cable television systems. This channel currently broadcasts and rebroadcasts the complete unedited gavel-to-gavel session proceedings of both houses of the legislature; all joint house sessions; all joint house budget hearings; all joint house conference committee meetings; all budget revenue forecast meetings; and, all public leaders meetings.

In addition, both houses of the Legislature currently webcast this content, as well as additional legislative material, on their respective Internet sites. The Senate, in their most recent rules, has provided for the recording and webcasting of public hearings and committee meetings.

Pursuant to Joint Rule IV, the Joint Advisory Board on Broadcast of State Government Proceedings, submits the following as an initial report to the Temporary President of the Senate, the Speaker of the Assembly, the

Minority Leader of the Senate, and the Minority Leader of the Assembly. The joint advisory board will immediately commence a series of public meetings to fulfill these goals:

- New York residents should have available to them an independent government affairs television channel (hereinafter known as “the channel”) based upon C-SPAN that will present viewers with complete and unedited legislative and other governmental proceedings, including executive and judicial branch material, as well as public policy – related programming.
- The channel must be independently run and free from any government editorial control, including any appointees to a governing board.
- The channel’s foundation should be the existing cable channel that broadcasts legislative proceedings. This existing channel is already available on virtually all of the state’s cable television systems, and is the result of a collaboration between the New York Legislature and the state’s cable television operators. All efforts should be made to make the channel available to as many New York television viewers as possible.
- The joint advisory board will immediately commence public meetings to facilitate the creation of the channel.
- The governing entity of the channel shall be created and be operational as soon as practicable. Such time is to be determined upon completion of the public meetings of the advisory board, no later than December 15, 2009.
- The existing channel shall expand its current programming in the interim to include the broadcast and rebroadcast of all state legislative hearings beginning no later than January 2010. This existing channel shall be governed by a formal operating agreement drafted and ratified by the joint advisory board no later than December 1, 2009. Any additional government programming, including promotional material provided by New York State’s 11 tourism regions, may be incorporated into the current programming of the existing channel by amendment to the formal operating agreement.
- Each house of the legislature will independently develop their websites to incorporate additional legislative materials, including but not limited to, hearings and committee meetings. These materials should be developed for potential inclusion on the channel.