

Why is Albany so dysfunctional?

The leadership in Albany being the majority leaders in the Senate and Assembly as well as the Governor have extraordinary powers compared to other states that make the rank and file members irrelevant. In most state legislatures, committees do the leg work of creating bills, amendments, having hearings and researching expert opinions. They help bring balance to the process and priorities along with accountability. In Albany, virtually none of this happens and if it does, the details have already been hammered out. They're just going through the motion where the minions are simply carrying out their marching orders from the leadership.

The only committee with some power is the Rules Committee, but even then, the leadership determines when they meet and often with no notice. The leadership determines what bills they will talk about too. There really is no representation because the membership has no real power.

The obvious question is why does the rank and file accept the status quo? Simply, it's easier to not go and work. It's easier to say to the leadership, "You and your staff take care of business of governing while I go back to my district with some member items to hand out to keep them happy." This is the definition of them serving the people of their district. If a legislator makes a fuss, they risk the amount of member items granted to them.

The other benefit legislators receive is that they can propose any legislation they know will never see daylight because only those bills the leadership supports will pass. In 2008, 18,000 bills were proposed. That's 7000 more than the U.S. Congress. Of the 18,000, only 9 percent passed. It's all a show with little substance.

With the laziness, spineless accountability, blatant corruption and showmanship, the rank and file will gladly appease the leadership. Last June, the assembly passed 202 bills averaging 3.9 minutes per bill. The problem is that many were introduced that day. According to law, bills must "age" for three days before they are put to a vote. Yet all you heard in the news was how hard the assembly was working while the Senate was playing their power games. How many assemblymen actually read the bills? The real tragedy is that many of the bills were never permitted by any committee to examine!

Those climbing the ladder within the party or the career politician are the least likely candidates who are serious and passionate enough to desire changing the process, priorities and accountability in Albany. My career is my family business, not 20 years in Albany. Give me six to see what I can fix.

Shawn Skeele  
NYS 111<sup>th</sup> Assembly Candidate