



**OFFICE OF
STATE TREASURER
DENISE L. NAPIER**

NEWS

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NAPIER URGES LEGISLATURE TO APPROVE COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM TO END LINKS BETWEEN CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS AND GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS, POLICY

Treasurer says piecemeal reforms are not enough to restore voter confidence

State Treasurer Denise L. Nappier is urging state legislators to approve a comprehensive campaign finance reform bill virtually identical to one vetoed by Governor Rowland in 2000.

Saying approval of the measure should be one of the legislature's "top priorities," Nappier said "we must, once and for all, separate from the electoral process the opportunity for money to influence government contracts and policy."

Treasurer Nappier testified before the legislature's Government Administration and Elections Committee at a public hearing at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. The 2004 legislative session convenes Wednesday, and the committee heard testimony on what will become a proposed bill to be considered during the session.

"We have seen, with increasing alarm, waves of scandals that have rocked the confidence of our electorate. Corruption has tainted municipal offices in Bridgeport and Waterbury, and has extended to statewide elected officials – most notably my predecessor, the disgraced Paul Silvester," Nappier said. "The General Assembly now stands at the threshold of a sobering, historic event – determining the fitness of our chief elected official to continue to lead the State."

Nappier said that in addition to measures aimed specifically at tightening ethics laws, a more comprehensive reform is needed to "redress the fundamental, systemic weakness of our current system of campaign finance." She said that otherwise, "as we tinker at the fringes of our current complex system, the very center of our democracy – voter turnout and confidence – erodes while voter cynicism grows."

The Treasurer also said that the "overbearing influence" of private money in the current system presents obstacles to women, African-Americans, Latinos and other minorities considering a candidacy for public office, because they often do not have access to the traditional sources of private campaign contributions.

In 2000, Nappier had urged Governor Rowland to sign both the campaign finance reform and Treasury reform bills passed by the legislature, saying, in the wake of the Silvester scandal, that the issues were "interrelated" and provided an opportunity to "end political influence peddling and eliminate the link – real or perceived – between campaign contributions and government decisions." Gov. Rowland signed the Treasury reform bill advocated by Treasurer Nappier but vetoed the campaign finance bill.

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