

CHARLES L. COPELAND

Minority Leader
STATE SENATOR
Fourth - District



SENATE
STATE OF DELAWARE
LEGISLATIVE HALL
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

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Contact: Charlie Copeland 656-4500
Liane Sorenson 234-3303
Steve Amick 738-0215

Senate Republicans Reaffirm Unanimous Commitment to Support Open Government.

Delaware Senate Republicans unanimously reaffirm their commitment to support open government, abolish the “desk drawer veto” and bring the legislature under FOIA (Freedom of Information Act).

“We hope the new Session to convene on January 8, 2008 will present an opportunity for review and reform of Senate procedures due to new membership in the Senate and new leadership of the Rules Committee” said Senate Minority Leader Charlie Copeland. “We plan to introduce legislation to reform the Senate Rules.”

Senate Republicans have consistently pushed for more open Senate operations. Prior to the 2006 election all Republican Senators and candidates put forth an agenda of five specific reforms. **(5-point plan below)*

Before the 2007 Session began, the Caucus repeated its call for the five specific reforms to be included in the Senate Rules for this General Assembly.

On the opening day of the Session, January 9, 2007, the 8 Republicans voted unanimously against the re-adoption of the old, archaic Senate Rules. They were joined in voting “No” by one Democrat, Senator Karen Peterson. Every other Democrat present voted “YES” to continue the old Rules without any discussion of reform.

Senate Resolution No. 2 passed by the bare majority of 11 votes. If any one of those 11 Democrats had supported open government, a discussion and rewrite of the Rules would have been required.

Below is the specific 5-point plan the Republicans have put forward for the past two years. “The plan has not changed, and we continue to stand behind it” says Senator Copeland.

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**Senate Republicans' 5-point plan for more open
and accountable government:**

- Pass legislation under FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) to define the General Assembly and all its standing and ad hoc committees as “public bodies”.
- Change Senate Rules to do away with the power of a Senate Committee chair to single-handedly kill legislation by preventing public debate (“desk drawer veto”).
- Change Senate Rules to create a deliberative process that guarantees legislation will get a public hearing in committee within a reasonable time frame.
- Post Senate Roll Call votes on the General Assembly website giving the public access to an accounting of individual votes by all Senators.
- Close loopholes to avoid the potential and appearance of conflict inherent in holding dual roles in government, including a prohibition on paid registered lobbyists holding office on state Authorities, Boards, Commissions and statutory Committees.

The Republican Senators & their Districts are: Senators Charlie Copeland (4th), Cathy Cloutier (5th), Liane Sorenson (6th), Steve Amick (10th), Dori Connor (12th), Colin Bonini (16th), John Still (17th) and Gary Simpson (18th).

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