

POLICY PROHIBITING FRATERNIZATION WITH STUDENT INTERNS

Every year the New York State Assembly welcomes hundreds of student interns for an academic and employment experience. These student interns are here to learn about the legislative process, work in government offices, conduct legislative research and drafting, and interact professionally with the public. The Assembly takes great pride in providing this invaluable "practical experience" component of the academic lives of these student interns.

In most, if not all circumstances, these student interns come to the Assembly from institutions which themselves have policies which prohibit fraternization between these students and their administrators/faculty. In order to be consistent, and because the Assembly recognizes its role in developing a mentor-student relationship, free from inappropriate interpersonal relationships, the Assembly, while not primarily an academic institution, seeks to impose analogous limitations on Members, staff, and student interns.

Accordingly, it is the policy of the New York State Assembly, that Members of the Assembly and all Assembly employees are prohibited from engaging in personal relationships with interns. Personal relationships may be defined as dating, romantic, sexual and/or otherwise intimate relationships, but are in no way limited to these definitions. We institute this policy in an effort to prevent favoritism, morale problems, disputes or misunderstandings, potential harassment claims, and inferences of impropriety.

Alleged violations of this policy:

- (a) by Members, shall be referred to the Assembly Committee on Ethics and Guidance for investigation and, if a determination is made that a violation has occurred, a recommendation for appropriate sanctions shall be made to the Speaker and, as appropriate, the Minority Leader (sanctions may include the full panoply of sanctions available to the Assembly Committee on Ethics and Guidance);
- (b) by employees, shall be investigated by the Office of Counsel to the Majority, and, if a determination is made that a violation has occurred, consistent with other employment practices, any of the full range of employment sanctions shall be imposed; and
- (c) by interns, shall be investigated by the Office of Counsel to the Majority, and, if a determination is made that a violation has occurred, upon consultation with the intern's college or university and the Assembly Intern Director, sanctions consistent with those set forth in the Intern Handbook shall be imposed.

Exemption: This policy shall not apply to personal relationships between Assembly employees and interns who have prior existing relationships as of the commencement of the internship. Provided, however, that anyone subject to this exemption shall notify the Office of Counsel to the Majority, with respect to the existence of this personal relationship, prior to the commencement of the internship period.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sheldon Silver", written in black ink. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

SHELDON SILVER, SPEAKER

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