

Editorial

With Record of Reform, Galef Deserves Another Term

The idea of term limits for legislators seems pretty good at first glance. If something sits around for too long it goes bad. This is true of men like Pedro Espada Jr. and Joe Bruno, and the recent Aqueduct Racetrack does nothing for voter confidence.

And then you meet Assemblywoman Sandy Galef. If there were term limits then Galef would be forced out, which is unfortunate, especially considering that 2011 could very well bring about the sort of reforms Galef has been pushing for years.

It is understandable that some voters are in the mood to oust any incumbent in state government. Albany has turned into a joke, though the punch line is a \$1 billion deficit and high taxes. Galef, though, remains a breath of fresh air in a toxic environment. She is a true independent that sticks to her beliefs. Removing Galef would be a step backwards in a state that needs to move forward.

The concept of consolidation has come into vogue, with nearly every politician

calling for the consolidation of services and programs at the state, county and local level. Galef was calling for consolidation before consolidation was cool.

She has been one of the few to focus on consolidation of school services, a divisive issue that has made her unpopular in some circles. But with the highest property taxes in the country, and schools taking up a majority of that tax bill, any attempt to curb education costs should be lauded. Galef has also been on the forefront on doing research on the effectiveness and implementation on a property tax cap and circuit breaker.

Her ideas, which involve consolidation at a municipal level, should be studied and reviewed. With the state facing billion dollar deficits, and municipal governments struggling to balance budgets, it is refreshing to see someone with bold ideas that could save taxpayers massive amounts of money.

Galef should also be commended for her refusal to take member items. While

member items do often help municipalities and can lead to some great things, too many times they are used simply for good PR in an election season. The doling out of member items also causes dysfunction and headaches in a legislative body that is filled with them, and it's refreshing to see a politician that simply refuses to play political games.

William Gouldman means well, and he is absolutely right about Albany and the need for reform, but many of Gouldman's attacks simply sound like rote GOP talking points, particularly his attacks on Assembly Majority Speaker Sheldon Silver. Often it sounds like Gouldman is running against Silver instead of Galef.

If re-elected, hopefully Galef will continue to try to push her ideas for radical reform throughout the state. In a state government dominated by entrenched politicians with excuses and stale ideas, Galef is the rare Albany veteran who has earned a new term.