



# **PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS OF LONG ISLAND**

[www.prpli.org](http://www.prpli.org)

Public Relations Professionals of Long Island (PRPLI) urges its membership to call or write your government officials expressing your concerns and issues with the Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) Advisory Opinion No. 16-01 pertaining to Legislative Law Article 1-A of the Lobbying Act.

## **STATEMENT**

The Board of Directors of Public Relations Professionals of Long Island (PRPLI), the premier organization for public relations and communications professionals on Long Island, representing more than 130 members, has approved the following statement in response to the Joint Commission on Public Ethics Advisory Opinion No. 16-01 pertaining to Legislative Law Article 1-A of the Lobbying Act.

**WHEREAS**, it is the opinion of this board that Governor Cuomo and JCOPE do not have a clear understanding of what it means to be a traditional PR practitioner and by the opinion it has rendered is clearly redefining the role of those professionals; and,

**WHEREAS**, the role of the public relations practitioner is entirely based on communication between client and client's constituency, which can and often includes customers, employees, investors, suppliers, media, marketing professionals and government usually through publicity and other nonpaid forms of communication; and,

**WHEREAS**, it is incumbent on the public relations practitioner to help a client develop a messaging strategy, which does not intone corruption; and,

**WHEREAS**, public relations practitioners are committed to upholding the integrity, honesty and ethical practices that are hallmarks of the profession; and,

**WHEREAS**, the aforementioned opinion by JCOPE is a distinct violation of the First Amendment right to free speech; and,

**WHEREAS**, said opinion violates the Constitutional rights of the press; and,

**WHEREAS**, there is apparent confusion by Governor Cuomo, JCOPE and other supporters of this opinion on the parameters that define ethical public relations and unethical methods of influence used by some individuals and corporations, many of which employ former legislators to advance their lobbying efforts; and,

**WHEREAS**, Albany and the New York state government employ many public relations professionals who use interaction with the media to advance the policies and opinions of government agencies; and,

**WHEREAS**, the requirements set forth by this opinion requiring PR professionals to file monthly reports of their contacts with government officials would create an undue and unfair burden on the practice of public relations; and,

**WHEREAS**, JCOPE's opinion falls far short of its mission to restore public trust in government; and,

**WHEREAS**, PRPLI supports Governor Cuomo's focus on curbing corruption in Albany, but not on the backs of a profession that honors and supports honesty, integrity and ethical behavior;

**THEREFORE, BE IT KNOWN THAT** PRPLI and its members, the public relations firms, journalists and others who have expressed their opposition to the New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics' (JCOPE) should be heard; and, that JCOPE should issue a revised opinion that incorporates a deeper understanding of where corruption lies and ways to control it that do not redefine the profession of public relations or impinge on the Constitutional rights of a profession and its practitioners.

To take a stand and express your opinion directly to [JCOPE](#), write a letter and send it to 540 Broadway, Albany, NY 12207 or call [\(518\) 408-3976](tel:5184083976)