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**Sent:** Thursday, January 16, 2020 12:32 PM

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**Subject:** **LEAD: What was going on behind the closed-doors appointment of Shoshanah Bewlay as executive director of the Committee on Open Government is NOW before her, testing her fitness**

**TO: Chris Bragg/Albany Times Union**

This follows my voice mail for you, shortly before 10 am this morning, commending you on your January 14<sup>th</sup> article "[State's new 'open government' expert was hired in secret](#)". Please call me, *as soon as possible*, as the story of the behind-closed-doors appointment of Shoshanah Bewlay as the Committee on Open Government's new executive director is more scandalous than you report – and I'd like to give you the LEAD as to what was going on behind those closed-doors from mid-September, when I first contacted the Department of State's Bureau of Resources Management about the appointment process.

As stated in my message, on October 3, 2019, I filed with the Department of State, a FOIL request for "all records reflecting the process by which the position of executive director for the Committee on Open Government is to be filled". In fact, my October 3, 2019 FOIL request was more than that – and encompassed my interaction with the Department of State's Bureau of Human Resources Management, furnishing it with "an appropriate, if not dispositive, test of the fitness of ANY candidate seeking appointment as the Committee on Open Government's new executive director".

That test – which will **END the Legislature's closed-door party conferences enabled by the 1985 amendment to the Open Meetings Law** – is now an "appropriate, if not dispositive, test" of Ms. Bewlay's fitness – and, on Monday, January 13, 2020, I forwarded the October 3, 2019 FOIL request to Ms. Bewlay, following her call back to me that morning in response to the phone message I had left for her on Wednesday, January 8<sup>th</sup> – the first day of the Legislature's 2020 session. Ms. Bewlay's new job as executive director began on Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup>.

As time is of the essence, I am cc'ing Chris Churchill whose yesterday's column "[Andrew Cuomo doesn't believe in sunlight](#)" is about Ms. Bewlay's appointment, as well as cc'ing other reporters and editors at the Albany Times Union.

If I do not hear back from you or anyone else at the Times Union by day's end, I will disseminate this dynamite story to other journalists for their investigation and reporting.

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director  
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