



Coalition Briefs

F L A S H

BREAKING NEWS ABOUT COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH IN NEW YORK

Further *coup* fall-out: Brennan stripped of MH chairmanship! *Mental health chair goes to Luster*

We all hoped against hope that it wouldn't happen, but Assemblyman James Brennan (D-Brooklyn), a great friend to the mental health community, has been stripped of his chairmanship of the Mental Health Committee in the State Assembly. This is seen as a punitive measure by Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver (D-Manhattan) for Brennan's participation in the attempted coup by Assemblyman Michael Bragman (D-Syracuse) last May. In Brennan's place, Silver has installed Assembly veteran Martin Luster (D-Ithaca), the former chair of the Real Property Committee.

Last year, Brennan also sat on the Education, Codes, Property Tax, and Corporations committees. While it is not customary for former chairs to retain membership in the committee that they chaired, Brennan's office expects to remain on these other committees. Committee assignments will be issued in the next few days. Despite the disappointment of losing the chairmanship, Brennan's office had nothing but praise for Chairman Luster, calling him very bright and expecting him to fit in well with the mental health community. The Coalition will meet with Assemblyman Luster at the first opportunity.

Harvey Weisenberg (D-Long Beach), also lost the chairmanship of his committee, Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. He will be replaced by Sam Hoyt (D-Buffalo), who has served on the same committee.

The leader of the coup attempt, Bragman was demoted shortly after the coup failed. His replacement will be Paul Tokasz (D-Buffalo). One curious note, all the new appointees are from upstate. ©