

Public Campaign Finance Board selects Chair and Vice Chair.

ALBANY, N.Y. (February 11, 2021) – At the third meeting of the Public Campaign Finance Board yesterday, the six commissioners voted unanimously to appoint Ekow N. Yankah as chair and Brian M. Kolb as vice chair. The motion to appoint the two commissioners in these roles was made by Commissioner Peter S. Kosinski, Republican Co-Chair of the State Board of Elections and seconded by Commissioner Douglas A. Kellner, the Democratic Co-Chair.

“I am deeply honored by the faith my colleagues have shown in me,” stated Commissioner Yankah, “I cannot think of more pressing work today than to secure faith in our elections, ensure elected officials are responsive to a broader electorate and inspire more citizens to know they can run for office.”

Commissioner Kolb said, “My priority will be to make sure the board’s work is bipartisan in nature, with the ultimate goal of providing trust and integrity in the entire process, so that there’s no one out there who believes the system is rigged to favor one political party or one political interest.”

Ekow N. Yankah was appointed to the PCFB by Carl Heastie, Speaker of the Assembly and Andrea Stewart Cousins, the Majority Leader of the State Senate. Commissioner Yankah is a Law Professor at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University. He has also taught at the University of Toronto Faculty of Law, the University of Illinois College of Law and the Georgetown University Law Center. His research considers the intersection of law and society, with particular focus on election reform, criminal justice and policing. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Innocence Project. Commissioner Yankah received the Innocence Project Advocate of Justice award in 2017. He lives in New York City with his family.

Brian M. Kolb was appointed by Republican Leader Will Barclay, Member of the Assembly and Senator Robert G. Ort, Republican Leader in the State Senate. Commissioner Kolb most recently retired as the Minority Leader of the Assembly after serving in that role for eleven years. He was first elected to the Assembly in 2000 representing Ontario and Seneca counties in New York’s Finger Lakes region. Prior to his election to the Assembly, Commissioner Kolb was the Town Supervisor for the Town of Richmond and served on the Ontario County Board of Supervisors. He is former adjunct professor at Roberts Wesleyan College and is a former President/COO of Refractron Technologies Corporation. He is currently Vice President and Strategic Advisor for BLOKK, Inc. He serves on the Advisory Board for the Ontario ARC, is a member of the Sons of the American Legion. He lives in Victor with his family.

The Public Campaign Finance Board was created by the State Legislature in 2019 as a result of action by a Blue Ribbon Commission appointed in the state budget of 2019-2020 to study public campaign finance reform in the state. The Board is charged with the responsibility of administering a program of public matching funds for candidates for state office beginning with the 2024 general election. The Board is made up of the four commissioners of the State Board of Elections plus three appointments, one each by the Governor, the Democratic leaders and the Republican leaders in each house of the Legislature. The Governor’s appointment is vacant.

If you have any questions about this press release, please contact John Conklin or Cheryl Couser at the Public Information Office, 518-474-1953; or by email at: INFO@elections.ny.gov.