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EMPIRE CENTER PRIES OPEN THE PORK BARREL

New Yorkers now can scrutinize more state pork-barrel spending details than ever, thanks to a newly expanded feature on SeeThroughNY, the Empire Center's transparency website.

Recipient names and amounts for more than 3,000 state grants totaling more than \$400 million, including more than 500 approved on the final day of the 2015 legislative session, were added to SeeThroughNY today.

The 13 types of grants includes \$61 million in educational "bullet aid" to school districts and disbursements from a \$350 million economic development slush fund created by the Legislature in 2008. The grants are awarded by listing the names of the recipients and dollar amounts in legislative resolutions, which are then adopted by voice vote.

The database also lists 644 projects that have sought or received more than \$200 million in funding from the secretive \$1.1 billion State and Municipal Facilities Program.

"Unfortunately, New York legislators not only continue to indulge in wasteful pork-barrel spending habits, but they are also still routinely concealing it," said Tim Hoefler, executive director of the Empire Center. "For example, there is no detail of how individual lawmakers voted on these items, or how the recipients were selected. Taxpayers need and deserve more transparency from state government."

The Empire Center, based in Albany, is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan think tank dedicated to promoting policies that can make New York a better place to live, work and do business.