

BRENNAN
CENTER
FOR JUSTICE

Brennan Center for Justice
at New York University School of Law

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November 22, 2010

Governor-Elect Andrew Cuomo
Attn: Transition Team
Church Street Station
P.O. Box 683
New York, NY 10008

Dear Governor-Elect Cuomo:

The Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law would like to express our support for your campaign pledge that makes cleaning up Albany a top priority for your administration. In particular, we urge you to place small-donor based public financing as the centerpiece of your agenda to restore integrity and honesty to state government.

Based on our extensive expertise with campaign finance laws in New York state and across the nation, we believe that small-donor based public financing is the most effective means to restore accountability to elected government. As detailed in our recent report on New York City's groundbreaking system, *Small Donor Matching Funds: The NYC Election Experience*¹ such a system can return power to everyday citizens and reduce candidates' reliance on special interests and other deep-pocketed donors.

As the Supreme Court has noted in *Buckley v. Valeo*, public financing promotes "uninhibited, robust, and wide-open public debate." Indeed, the Supreme Court's decision this year in *Citizens United v. FEC* reaffirmed that "it is our law and our tradition that more speech, not less, is the governing rule." A small donor multiple matching fund system boosts citizen participation while reducing the relative importance of special interest funding. These measures are most effective when combined with other reforms of money in politics, and we support the specific measures detailed in your agenda book *Clean Up Albany: Make It Work*.

To change the culture in Albany, we must change how we finance New York State elections. We encourage you to keep the adoption of small-donor based public financing and other money in politics reforms at the top of your agenda.

Sincerely,



Michael Waldman
Executive Director
Brennan Center for Justice

¹ Available at http://www.brennancenter.org/content/resource/small_donor_matching_funds_the_nyc_election_experience/.