

February 3, 2012

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

We write to express our strong support for the pledge you made during your State of the State address to introduce 2012 legislation to create a public funding option for New York state elections. We applaud your leadership in pursuing this vital goal; public financing is the single most important next step to upend the perception of “pay-to-play” culture in Albany and promote greater transparency, competition, and accountability.

As good government, civil rights, environmental, labor, business, religious and grassroots community organizations, we are united in our desire to see strong campaign finance reform with a system of public financing of elections. We stand ready to work with you and members of the legislature to achieve victory this legislative session. We have already begun to marshal the necessary resources to launch a robust campaign to do so. With your leadership, New York will be an example for the nation of how to revitalize democracy at all levels of government.

As you noted in your address, New York lags behind other states in political participation, but public financing has the capacity to empower average voters to have a voice in the political process. After *Citizens United*, we face an era of unlimited and increasingly secret spending on elections. New York City’s experience shows that a public financing option can counter the potentially corrupting influence of big money in politics. Public financing enables candidates to run competitive campaigns while relying on a base of small donors back home, rather than on a small number of wealthy contributors. By doing so, public financing is particularly valuable for promoting participation among voters and candidates in low-income communities and communities of color. Public financing will promote accountability and diversity in New York’s governance while revitalizing our participatory democracy.

Integral to reforming the state’s campaign finance laws are other essential elements set forth in your State of the State address. Reasonable contribution limits without loopholes; “pay to play” rules for companies and individuals doing business with the State; and, in particular, strong but fair and independent enforcement of our campaign finance laws – all of these are needed to restore public trust in our government.

Your continued leadership will be critical to winning this legislative session. We urge you to press hard for the creation of a robust public financing program, and we offer our collective support to enact this essential reform.

Sincerely,

1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East
32 BJ
ACT NOW
Albany Presbytery, PC (USA)
ALIGN

Alliance for Quality Education
Americans for Campaign Reform
Asian Pacific Americans for Progress-New York
BALCONY, The Business and Labor Coalition of NY
Barack Obama Democratic Club

Barack Obama Democratic Club of East Harlem
Binghamton Southside Neighborhood Assembly
Brennan Center for Justice
Brooklyn Movement Center
Brooklyn and Staten Island MoveOn Councils
Buffalo Teachers Federation
Buffalo MoveOn Council
Capital Region MoveOn Council
Center for Working Families
Citizen Action of New York
Citizen Action of New York City
Citizens Committee for New York City
Citizens for a Better New York (CFBNY)
Citizens Union
Coalition for Economic Justice
Coalition for the Homeless
Colgate University Democracy Matters
Common Cause NY
Community Free Democrats
Community Voices Heard
CWA District 1
Democracy for New York City
Democracy Matters
Democrats.com
Demos
Disabled In Action of Metropolitan New York
Downtown Independent Democrats
Drum Major Institute
East Side Democratic Club
Fingerlakes MoveOn Council
Foundation of Integrative AIDS Research
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition
Greater NYC for Change
Human Services Council
Hunger Action Network of NY State
Interfaith Impact of New York State
Iona College Democracy Matters
Jobs with Justice Long Island
Justice and Peace Resource Center
Labor-Religion Coalition of New York State
La Fuente
League of Women Voters
Long Island Progressive Coalition
Make the Road NY
Manhattan MoveOn Council
Manhattan Young Democrats
Metro New York Healthcare for All
Metropolitan Russian American Parent Association
Mount Vernon United Tenants
NAACP New York State Conference
Nassau County MoveOn Council
NASW-NYS
National Council of Jewish Women - NY Section
New Kings Democrats

New Roosevelt Initiative
New York Civic
New York Communities for Change
New York State Nurses Association
New York Uprising (Edward I. Koch, Founder)
Northern Westchester MoveOn Council
Northwest Bronx for Change
NYPIRG
OCA-NY
PEF ENCON
People United for Sustainable Housing
Planned Parenthood of South Central NY
Port Jefferson MoveOn Council
Public Campaign
Public Employees Federation of NY
PUSH-Buffalo
Queens County Young Democrats
Queens MoveOn Council
Reform Jewish Voice of New York State
Reinvent Albany
Rochester MoveOn Council
RWDSU
Saratoga MoveOn Council
Schuyler Center for Analysis & Advocacy
Sierra Club Susquehanna Group
St. Lawrence University Democracy Matters
Strong Economy for All
Sullivan County MoveOn Council
SUNY Binghamton Democracy Matters
SUNY Buffalo Democracy Matters
SUNY Geneseo Democracy Matters
Syracuse MoveOn Council
Syracuse University Democracy Matters
Tenants Political Action Committee
The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester (TIAR)
Tribeca for Change
UAW Region 9
UAW Region 9A
UFCW 1500
Ulster County MoveOn Council
Union College Democracy Matters
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Binghamton
United New York
Upper West Side MoveOn Council
Urban Justice Center
Utica MoveOn Council
Voices of Community Activists & Leaders
Welfare Rights Initiative
WESPAC Foundation
West Side Campaign Against Hunger
Westchester for Change
Westchester MoveOn Council
Women's City Club of New York
Working Families Party