

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
 Working Families Party