

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Interested Parties  
**FROM:** Jeffrey Pollock & Kieran Mahoney  
**RE:** NY Friends of Democracy Survey: Strong Support for Campaign Finance Reform  
**DATE:** May 6, 2013

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### METHODOLOGY

This memorandum summarizes the results of a survey of 604 likely 2014 voters in New York. The survey was conducted via telephone on behalf of New York Friends of Democracy from April 29 to May 1, 2013.

- Special care was taken to ensure that the geographic and demographic divisions of veteran voters nationwide have been properly represented.
- The margin of error associated with a sample of this size is 4.0% at the 95% confidence interval. This means that in 95 of 100 cases, the results of this survey are within plus or minus 4.0 points of the results that would have been obtained if all registered voters who have served in the military had been interviewed.

### SUMMARY OF RESULTS

**Voters overwhelmingly agree that campaign finance reform is key to ending corruption in state politics.**

- The job being done by New York's state legislature is rated negatively by 71% of likely voters, and 82% place the blame for the legislature's poor performance on corruption and the influence of money in politics.
- Fully 97% of voters say it is important for state leaders to address "reducing the influence of money in politics and ending corruption," including 50% who say it is extremely important and another 39% who say it is very important.
- That is higher than the number who want leaders to address other popular items on the Governor's agenda, such as "reducing the threat of gun violence" (42% extremely/31% very) and "improving reproductive health and pay equity for women" (28% extremely/37% very).
- It is also significantly higher than the number who want action on more controversial items like "legalizing the use of medical marijuana" (9% extremely/12% very) and "legalizing casino gambling by amending the state constitution: (5% extremely/9% very).
- More than three quarters of likely voters (78%) agree "reforming New York's campaign finance laws is key to cleaning up Albany, rooting out corruption and improving the work of state government."
- Seven in 10 likely voters (70%) believe campaign finance reform would be effective at reducing the influence of money in politics, and the same percentage believe reform would help to end corruption in state government.

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**A strong bipartisan majority supports one current campaign finance reform proposal in particular and believes it would be effective at reducing the influence of money and curtailing corruption.**

- Nearly three quarters of likely voters (74%) support one proposal to reform New York's campaign finance laws that would provide public matching funds for small donations, lower contribution limits, disclose the spending of outside groups, and more strictly enforce all campaign finance laws. Just 16% are opposed to the proposal.
- Support for this campaign finance reform proposal is nearly as high as support for campaign finance reform generally (77% support/7% oppose).
- Seven in 10 likely voters (70%) believe the proposal would reduce the influence of money in politics, and a slightly higher percentage (72%) believes it would help to end corruption in state government.
- Support for the proposal is even higher among voters in upstate New York (78%) than among voters in New York City (70%) or the suburbs (72%).
- Strong majorities of voters of all partisan stripes support the proposal: 80% of Independents/Blanks, 75% of Democrats and 68% of Republicans.

**Specific reform provision enjoys broad support that crosses regional and party lines; Governor Cuomo's popularity helps advance reform.**

- Specific elements of the proposal receive strong support, as well. Almost two thirds of likely voters (65%) support creating a system of public campaign financing that would limit the size of political contributions to candidates for state offices and provide public money to match the smaller contributions – which is slightly higher than the support for public financing found in a recent Siena College poll.
- Public campaign financing is supported by a strong majority of voters in all parts of the state, including 71% of voters in the suburbs, 63% of voters upstate, and 63% of voters in New York City. And in addition to 68% of Democrats, public campaign financing is supported by 64% of Independents/Blanks and 62% of Republicans.
- Governor Andrew Cuomo enjoys a strong personal popularity rating (64% favorable/29% unfavorable), and 29% say his support of campaign finance reform makes them more inclined to support it – almost six times as many who say his support makes them less inclined (5%). Even 25% of Republicans say the Governor's opinion would make them more inclined to support campaign finance reform