



November 26, 2018

Governor Cuomo and Members of the New York State Legislature,

We write to urge you to make voting rights and comprehensive campaign finance reform, led by a system of public financing of elections, the first order of business in the 2019 New York State Legislative Session.

The need for an overhaul of New York's voting and campaign financing system is apparent and well documented. It is inherently inequitable, unfair and allows an exorbitant amount of power to be concentrated in the hands of the very few wealthy and well-connected. This is at the great expense of every day New Yorkers, and even more so for low-income and people of color, who face daily crises around housing, education, health, transportation, a racist criminal justice system, and poor working conditions.

The point is, the policies we care most about are at a consistent disadvantage in our state's political process, when facing well-heeled opposition. A small minority of ultra-wealthy interests are doing all they can across the country—in state legislatures and in the courts—to weaken rules that support democracy and collective action, and strengthen rules that protect property interests above all else, including the desires of the majority of people. This is a national crisis, and New York State can be a leader in stopping it. It is with this in mind that we are coming together now, with a unified voice, to be very clear about our collective request to make strengthening democracy in New York State—both voting reform and public financing of elections—your top priority early in 2019.

The solutions we propose are well known. They are the same recommendations of the Moreland Commission of 2013, and similar to proposals Governor Cuomo, Leader Stewart-Cousins, and Speaker Heastie have sponsored or introduced over the years. They include:

- A 6-1 small donor public financing system for all state races, including District Attorneys statewide, lower contributions limits, closing the LLC loophole and a functional, fair administrative agency, much like Connecticut's Citizens Elections Program.

- A voting rights package that includes, but is not limited to: enfranchisement of people on parole into law; automatic voter registration; early voting; same day registration (amendment); and pre-registration of 16- and 17-year olds.

Early 2019 enactment of these critical, foundational reforms that would change the way Albany operates can and should be the first of many sizable victories for the people of New York under new leadership. We are thankful that many of you each have publicly supported these reforms in the past, and equally thankful that there is no longer anything standing in the way of making them a reality. We look forward to working closely with you to enact a democracy package that can be the gold standard for the rest of the nation.

Sincerely,

32BJ SEIU
50 West 93 Street Tenant Association
ALIGN
Alliance for Quality Education
American Pakistani Public Affairs Committee
Association of Tenants of Lincoln Towers
Bend the Arc
The Black Institute
Brennan Center for Justice
Buffalo Democratic Socialists of America
Campaign for New York Health
Capital District Democratic Socialists of America
Churches United For Fair Housing
Citizen Action New York
The Civics Center
Community Voices Heard
CWA District 1
Democracy Initiative
Democracy Matters
Demos
Dutchess County Progressive Action Alliance
Empire State Indivisible
End Citizens United
Equal Citizens
Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island
Every Voice
Four Freedoms Democratic Club

Greater NYC for Change
Grassroots Action NY
Human Works, Inc.
Human Services Council
Humanists of Long Island
Indivisible Beekman
Indivisible CD19 NY
Indivisible Nation BK
Indivisible the Fight Is On
Jews for Racial & Economic Justice
Labor-Religion Coalition of NYS
Long Island Civic Engagement Table
Long Island Jobs with Justice
Long Island Network for Change
Long Island Progressive Coalition
Long Island Together
Make the Road New York
MAYDAY America
Metro New York Health Care for All
MPower Change
Muslims For Progress
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
New York Civic Engagement Table
New York Communities for Change
New York Immigration Coalition
New York Progressive Action Network
New York State Council of Churches
New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG)
Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson
No IDC NY
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment (NACCE)
Northeast NY Coalition for Occupational Safety & Health
Northwest Bronx Indivisible
NYCAIC's #HALTsolitary campaign
NYCD16 Indivisible
NYS Nurses Association (NYSNA)
Our Revolution
The People's Empowerment Project/Democracy Coffee
People Power Patchogue
Persist81

Progressive East End Reformers (PEER)
Progressive Power Inwood Heights
Progressive Turnout Project
Public Citizen
Rally+Rise
Reinvent Albany
RepresentUs
Riverside Edgecombe Neighborhood Association
Rockland United
Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter
Small Planet Institute
Solidarity Committee/Capital District
Strong Economy For All Coalition
Suffolk Progressives
Sunrise NYC
Tenants Political Action Committee
True Blue New York
Ulster People for Justice & Democracy
Union Vale Indivisible
Uptown Progressive Action
Westchester for Change
Working Families Party