



## LET NEW YORKERS KNOW WHAT REFORM ISSUES YOU SUPPORT

New Yorkers are fed up. Scandals have driven from office the former governor, the former comptroller, the former Senate Majority Leader and a growing number of state legislators. Some elected officials are currently under investigation. Many of these abuses of power were rooted in the absence of effective and independent ethics and fiscal watchdogs, tough ethics laws and adequate transparency in government.

Albany must respond by producing concrete reforms to show the public that lawmakers have gotten the message and are working to bolster confidence in state government.

**We urge elected officials to pledge to enact meaningful reforms. Our groups will be publicly releasing the responses we receive. Below, please clearly check the proposals in which you are in agreement (feel free to send us any additional comments):**

### *Restore the public's trust.*

- Ensure that ethics, lobbying and campaign finance watchdogs are independent and powerful.
- End the practice of legislators drawing their own district lines during the redistricting process.
- Provide fairness in allocating legislative resources and "member items," and amend the legislature's rules to create a more open and accountable body.

### *Reform the state's finances.*

- Close obsolete public authorities through the creation of a "base closing commission," which would review all authorities and close down obsolete ones.
- Establish an independent fiscal watchdog, along the lines of the Congressional Budget Office.
- Open up the government's budget books and put them on-line, greatly expanding the amount of available information beyond the Comptroller's "Open Book New York."

### *Curb the power of special interests*

- End "pay to play" for lobbyists and seekers – and receivers – of government contracts by dramatically lowering contribution limits for such donors. *With additions, see attachment*
- Require public disclosure of "independent" campaign contributions and close loopholes, such as ones that allow donations by LLCs to be treated as if they were contributions from individuals. *With additions, see attachment*
- Bolster the role of small donors in the campaign finance system. For example, a system of public financing enhances the role of small donors. *With additions, see attachment*

Your name Assembly Leader BRIAN KOLB Date 4/28/10

Please fax this form, or email it to Anna Gifford, NYPIRG, 518 432-6178 or [agiff06@gmail.com](mailto:agiff06@gmail.com)  
From more information contact Blair Horner, NYPIRG, at 518 436-0876 x257.

## **Assembly Leader Brian M. Kolb, April 28, 2010**

### **Curb the Power of Special Interests: Additions that Must Be Included**

#### **Ending "Pay to Play"**

"Pay to play" scandals have cast an ethical dark cloud over New York, further eroding public trust and confidence in our state government. Truly ending pay to play practices will require contribution limits also being placed on public employee unions that negotiate contracts with state and local government officials. Public employee compensation and benefit plans are often a contributing factor to New York's crushing state and local tax burden. Therefore, public employee union representatives should be held to the same standards as any other lobbyists. Ending Albany's corrosive culture of pay to play will require a level playing field that accounts for all interests seeking access to, and influence of, state government.

#### **Limiting LLC's**

There are far too many loopholes throughout New York State's campaign finance system. Fair campaign finance reform must require full disclosure and actually close ALL loopholes within the current system. The definition of a "contribution" in relation to limits should also include in-kind contributions, including those typically made by organized labor, such as the use of phone banks and paid leave from work for volunteers performing campaign activities. All contributions – either direct or in-kind – must be fully accounted for and properly disclosed.

#### **Enacting Public Financing**

Political campaigns in New York State last too long and cost too much. A system of public financing could reduce the influence of special interests. With New York State facing a \$9.05 billion budget deficit, we must ensure that any public financing of political campaigns does not become another burden on an already overstrained budget and overburdened taxpayers. Therefore, public financing of campaigns must not come out of the State's General Fund. A new funding mechanism would need to be identified and carefully explored, whether it employs a public-private system, or establishes formulas and thresholds that candidates must first meet before receiving public financing.