

## **Pledge for Change New York**

### **Additional Comments**

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#### **Curb the Power of Special Interests**

##### **Ending “Pay to Play”**

There is little question that “Pay to play” scandals have plagued New York and allowed for a ‘crisis of confidence’ in state government by the very people we are to serve. Efforts to curb these practices must include similar disclosure requirements and contribution limits placed on unions having contracts with state and local government. If we are to demand a level playing field and root out true conflicts of interest every stakeholder in this political process must be held to the same standard.

Negotiated contracts, benefits, pension costs and health insurance benefits all contribute to the cost of government and add to the burden of state and local taxes.

##### **Limiting LLC’s**

New York’s campaign finance laws are in need of comprehensive reforms. As the Ranking Minority Member on the Assembly Election Law Committee, I am well aware of the weaknesses found in state law and the abuses that too often and too easily occur. Any campaign finance reform that is comprehensive must require full and more immediate disclosure and treat ‘in-kind’ contributions by labor groups as we expect to treat such contribution made by private industry. Crafting a system that protects influence peddling in one form why vilifying it in another is not reform. Total and complete reform must provide for a level playing field and greater transparency so the public can consider the impact every monetary and in-kind contributions have on their elected officials.

##### **Enacting Public Financing**

While I support ways to “bolster the role of small donors” I am not convinced that public financing is the best and most appropriate option. In light of our current budget crisis and the high tax burden placed on all New Yorkers, any public financing system cannot add to this burden as I believe taxpayers would not accept it.

No one can deny that campaigns in New York start too soon, last too long and cost too much. Public financing of campaigns could reduce special interest influence. If legislation were proposed to implement a public financing system, I would welcome and encourage thoughtful consideration. Making use of taxpayer dollars for political campaigns must be considered carefully.