



For Immediate Release  
Wednesday, April 18, 2012

Dick Dadey, 917-709-2896  
Alex Camarada, 202-494-0611

## CITIZENS UNION ANNOUNCES PARTICIPATION IN FAIR ELECTIONS CAMPAIGN IN NEEDED PUSH FOR CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Diverse Coalition Represents Unique Opportunity to Achieve  
Much-Needed Campaign Finance Reform That Includes Public Financing

New York State Should Replicate City's Successful Matching System That Empowers Small Donors,  
Closes Loopholes, Robustly Enforces the Law and Ends Pay-to-Play Culture

---

[Citizens Union](#) is pleased to announce today its participation in the [Fair Elections campaign](#), a diverse coalition of good government groups, issue-advocacy organizations, community groups, unions, and business leaders united in support of achieving change to New York's campaign finance laws.

The newly created coalition marks a watershed moment in the decades-long advocacy for campaign finance reform in Albany. The lack of meaningful reform to our state's porous campaign finance laws has for far too long produced a pay-to-play culture that makes the everyday person feel as if their voice matters little in our political process. Moneyed special interests increasingly dominate governmental decision-making, and there is a growing sentiment that the public interest has become marginalized. Consequently, campaign finance reform is no longer the yeoman's work of good government groups like Citizens Union, which has long supported change; it has become a priority issue embraced by the general public and both sides of the political spectrum. The broad coalition under the banner of Fair Elections is very much a response to an accumulation of undue influence by those with the cash and the connections, and it represents a unique opportunity to reform campaign finance reform.


Citizens Union and our partners in the Fair Elections campaign call on New York State this year to adopt the model campaign finance system of New York City. The essential components of this reform that will amplify the voice of everyday people include:

1. **A public financing system that will incentivize small donors** to participate in our democracy by matching their contributions by \$6 for every \$1 raised up to \$175. This will help level the playing field between ordinary New Yorkers and moneyed interests.
2. **A robust enforcement unit that will strongly enforce campaign finance laws.** The use of taxpayer dollars in campaigns requires that there is a cop on the beat to ensure the integrity of the system.
3. **The closure of loopholes and establishment of reasonable contribution limits** to ensure contributions from small donors are not overwhelmed by high individual limits or donations in

excess of the individual limits made to political party and party housekeeping accounts.

4. **Pay-to-play restrictions for lobbyists and contractors** so those doing business with the state do not leverage their relationships for undue influence.
5. **Ample disclosure of the money spent on political campaigns** including enhanced transparency of uncoordinated spending by third-party organizations and the individuals and groups that fund those entities.

Citizens Union echoes the call made by Governor Cuomo in his State of the State speech to realize campaign finance reform this year, and urges the legislature to pass reforms including these essential provisions.



[Citizens Union](#) is a nonpartisan good government group dedicated to making democracy work for all New Yorkers. Citizens Union serves as a civic watchdog, combating corruption and fighting for political reform. We work to ensure fair and open elections, honest and efficient government, and a civically-engaged public.

299 Broadway, Suite 700 | New York, NY 10007 US