

Copies To:

December 19, 2012

Hon. Carolyn Maloney, Congresswoman
Hon. Jerrold Nadler, Congressman
Hon. Thomas Duane, Senator
Hon. Kirsten Gillibrand, Senator
Hon. Liz Krueger, Senator
Hon. Charles Schumer, Senator
Hon. Richard Gottfried, Assembly Member
Hon. Scott Stringer, Manhattan Bor. Pres.
Hon. Christine Quinn, Council Speaker
Hon. Rosie Mendez, Council Member
Hon. Brad Hoylman, District Leader



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Dear Sirs and Mesdames:

We urge you to support two measures that are critical in the effort to put democracy back in the hands of the people and promote fairness in elections.

First, please implement a system of public matching funds for small donations in state races (the Fair Elections Act). Second, please support a resolution urging Congress to pass a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* and related cases.

New York City's experience shows that public financing of elections can counter the potentially corrupting influence of big money in politics. New York City's public financing system enables candidates to run competitive campaigns relying on a base of small donors, rather than on corporations or a small number of wealthy contributors. Public financing will promote accountability and diversity in New York's government while revitalizing our participatory democracy.

The other essential measure in building a just democracy is overturning *Citizens United*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that held that corporations have a constitutional right to spend unlimited money to influence election outcomes. We are already seeing the damaging impact of *Citizens United* on our electoral process. Reported spending by outside groups empowered by *Citizens United* rose 328 percent in the 2010 election over the previous midterm election cycle, reaching \$294 million, according to OpenSecrets.org. Outside group spending is likely to exceed \$1 billion in 2012, much of it channeled through organizations that do not disclose their donors.

The vast majority of the American people are outraged by the Court's decision. Nearly 9 in 10 Americans believe that big companies have too much power. Republicans, Democrats and Independents who have heard about *Citizens United* believe by a significant margin (almost 4 to 1) that the ruling is having a negative effect.

A powerful and fast-growing movement is calling for a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United*. New York would join 7 state legislatures that already have called for a constitutional amendment. Three hundred cities and town nationwide have passed resolutions or ballot initiatives calling for an amendment. In total, resolutions have been introduced or passed in 30 states.

Many cities in New York are already having a strong stand against *Citizens United*. So far, 13 city councils – including those in Albany, Brighton, Buffalo, Danby, Ithaca, Mount Kisco, Mount Vernon, New York City, Peekskill, Sullivan County, Tompkins County, Troy and Yonkers – have passed resolutions, and many more are considering passage.

Rescuing our democracy from control by corporations and the super wealthy requires that we overturn *Citizens United* and related rulings and pass vibrant public financing laws. We urge you to help lead the way in establishing that the people, not the corporations, rule.

CHELSEA REFORM DEMOCRATIC CLUB

Steven Skyles-Mulligan

Steven Skyles-Mulligan, President

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