



# Suffolk County Voter

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\*LWVSC Board Meeting: 10:00am Wednesday June 22 at SCCC, Main St., Riverhead  
\*LWVSC board retreat Wednesday July 27 at Glorian Berk's home (details to be announced)

July 2016

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## SC Legislator/Deputy Presiding Officer Robert Calarco introduces IR 1566 "A Charter Law Establishing a Public Campaign Financing Law"

The League strongly advocates for Campaign Finance Reform on the national and state levels, and now we have the opportunity to study and potentially advocate for specific legislation on the county level.

LWV believes strong, well-enforced campaign finance regulations, along with a system of small donor matching grants, are a pathway to expanding voter participation, increasing more candidate diversity, and lessening the impact of special interests.

Leg. Colarco and his staff have worked with the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU over the past year, specifically reviewing details of the New York City Campaign Finance Board Matching Funds Program, which is considered to be a successful model.

*Text of Leg. Calarco's bill may be read at <http://legis.suffolkcountyny.gov/resos2016/i1566-16.pdf>*

The purpose of this legislation is to "enlarge the voice of average residents in Suffolk County" (as you read through the bill you'll see how the 2:1 matching funds are applied with what requirements). There would be full reporting, as is already required by law. The legislation is quite deliberately starting small – hoping that there will be a positive experience and can potentially be expanded to county-wide offices since the required funding is hugely greater for those races.

The monies from the Video Lottery Terminals (VLT) are "new money" and the VLT will probably be placed in the Marriott Islandia, where there is a pending deal with local support in place. The county expects \$2 million in revenue, and this would cover an initial budget of \$100,000 per legislative district x 18 districts, thus \$1.8 million plus expenses in the first election year. Thus the money for the funding is not part of the general fund.

The legislation also includes a proposal to change the term of office from 2 years to 4 years, which means that the need to raise money becomes a once-in-4 years need.

The schedule for the bill, which was laid on the table on June 1 is:

- Public hearing and comment on June 21 at the Suffolk County Legislature General Meeting in Riverhead.
- Bill goes to Ways and Means committee meeting on July 21 in Hauppauge.
- If approved by the committee, bill voted on at General Meeting on July 26 in Hauppauge.
- If passed by the Legislature, and if approved by the County Executive, it goes on the November ballot in Suffolk County as a proposition.
- If approved by a majority of voters it becomes Charter Law in Suffolk County.

LWVSC commends Leg. Calarco on the effort to address this vital issue. We hope that the



**Bianca Taipe, LWVSC's representative to the 2016 Students Inside Albany conference shadowing Assemblyman Andrew Raia.**

Legislators will work across the aisle to make viable public campaign financing a reality for Suffolk County Legislature races in the near future. This program might then serve as a first step to much-needed comprehensive campaign financing overhauls in the county.

The LWVSC board will be studying the details of IR1566 through the lens of LWVUS and LWVNYS positions on campaign finance reform. If the LWVSC board approves support for IR1566 we will be working through our local Leagues in Suffolk to educate the public on the importance of voting on the ballot proposition in November.