

**CITIZENS UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
COMMON CAUSE/NY
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS/N.Y.S.
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NEWS RELEASE

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CIVICS DEMAND GOVERNOR, STATE LEGISLATURE ACT ON MEASURES TO REFORM CAMPAIGN FINANCE AND ETHICS LAWS

Civic groups today called on Governor Paterson and the state's legislative leaders to enact sweeping reforms to the state's campaign finance and ethics laws. Surrounded by citizen activists, Citizens Union of the City of New York, Common Cause/NY, the League of Women Voters/N.Y.S. and NYPIRG kicked off their advocacy push as Albany has come under increasing public criticism due to ever-present controversies and scandals involving public officials who are entrusted with the responsibility of faithfully serving the public.

In a letter to the governor and legislative leaders, the groups offered a comprehensive reform package that would help stem, and hopefully improve, the public's rapidly eroding confidence in state government. The groups urged the governor and the legislative leaders to focus on two key issues during the post-budget session: campaign finance and ethics reforms.

The groups noted that the governor and the majorities in both houses have repeatedly stated their collective commitment to reform Albany. In the area of campaign finance, the groups have noted public statements in which the governor and legislative leaders individually expressed their support for campaign finance reform. The groups noted that the public will judge the governor and legislative leaders on whether they have fulfilled their promises by making these reforms a reality.

Given the controversies, indictments and convictions of state public officials stemming from corrupt activities, the groups highlighted the need for action to restore the public's confidence in Albany's ethical standards. Calling the post-budget period "a critical opportunity to restore public confidence in state government," the groups urged the immediate enactment of meaningful reforms. Specifically, the groups called for:

- **Establishment of a voluntary public financing system.**
- **Overhaul of the state's existing campaign finance system: lower contribution limits, a ban on "soft money," closing loopholes and stronger campaign disclosure requirements.**
- **Creation of an independent campaign finance agency with the resources and authority to enforce the elections law.**
- **Creation of a new, independent ethics oversight agency with jurisdiction over both the executive and legislative branches.**
- **Establishment of stringent requirements for financial disclosure for public officers.**
- **Strengthening the ban on the personal use of campaign contributions.**
- **Specific restrictions on campaign contributions from lobbyists and those receiving government contracts ("pay to play").**

Attached: Detailed summaries of recommended campaign finance and ethics changes.