



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0075-2014, **Version:** *

Res. No. 75

Resolution in support of A.4980-C/S.4705-A, also known as the "2013 Fair Elections Act," which would create a public campaign financing system for campaigns for New York statewide office, state legislative office and constitutional convention delegate.

By Council Members Williams, Constantinides, Mendez and Kallos

Whereas, New York State does not currently have a public campaign financing system for candidates running for statewide office, state legislative office or constitutional convention delegate; and

Whereas, The current New York State campaign contribution limit for a candidate running in a primary and general election for statewide office is \$60,700, and between \$8,200 and \$16,800 for state legislative office, as compared to \$5,000 for a United States Presidential candidate; and

Whereas, The current New York State limit on direct corporate contributions to candidates is \$5,000, as compared to an absolute ban on such contributions under New York City and federal law: and

Whereas, In 2010 the United States Supreme Court issued a decision in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, holding that corporations and other groups may engage in unlimited independent spending on elections; and

Whereas, The Supreme Court decision, combined with New York State's current contribution limits and lack of a public campaign financing system, has the potential to hinder electoral competition and increase the risk of corruption by allowing wealthy individuals and corporations to spend large amounts to fund political campaigns; and

Whereas, Public campaign financing provides candidates with resources to run competitive races, improves

election transparency through more stringent disclosure requirements and reduces the risk of corruption and the appearance of impropriety by decreasing the potential for undue influence from wealthy contributors; and

Whereas, A.4980-C/S.4705-A, also known as the "2013 Fair Elections Act," currently pending in the State Assembly and Senate and introduced by Assembly Speaker Silver and Senator Stewart-Cousins, respectively, would establish a New York State optional partial public campaign financing system for campaigns for statewide office, state legislative office, and constitutional convention delegates; and

Whereas, This public campaign finance system would be a matching funds system whereby candidates would get \$6 for every \$1 of eligible contributions up to \$250, and could raise no more than \$2,000 from any single contributor; and

Whereas, A matching funds system would increase voter participation by encouraging candidates to seek smaller contributions from a larger donor base, and thereby reduce the disproportionate influence of wealthy donors and corporations; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York supports A.4980-C/S.4705-A, also known as the "2013 Fair Elections Act," which would create a public campaign financing system for campaigns for New York statewide office, state legislative office and constitutional convention delegate.

AM
Res 1520/2012
LS 455/2014
02/10/2014