



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1140-2003, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1140

Resolution urging the New York State Legislature to pass legislation reforming the present judicial election process by (i) establishing a voluntary Campaign Finance Program for all judicial candidates, (ii) requiring all judicial candidates, whether inside or outside such system, to disclose contributions and expenditures and (iii) requiring the New York State Board of Elections to publish a meaningful and objective voters guide for all judicial elections.

By Council Members Yassky, Koppell, Avella, Brewer, Felder, Gerson, Clarke and James

Whereas, A system in which elected officials, including judges, rely on funds from wealthy private contributors diminishes the meaning of the right to vote and has a damaging effect on democracy and the fair representation of all citizens in the political process; and
Whereas, It is vital to the stability and function of the courts of the State of New York to have judges who are selected by voters equipped with the proper knowledge and information upon which to make an informed decision at the polls; and

Whereas, There are serious deficiencies in the process of candidate selection and campaign finance in the judicial election process; and

Whereas, The current practice of judicial selection in New York has serious deficiencies, such as non-competitive races and cross-endorsement by more than one political party so as to give the voters little or no choice; and

Whereas, There needs to be a more transparent system by which judicial candidates mandatorily disclose contributions and expenditures to the public so that the voters may make an informed election decision; and

Whereas, Requiring the New York State Board of Elections to publish a meaningful and objective voters guide for judicial elections, as New York City has done since 1988 for city elections, would further increase the amount of information available to voters; and

Whereas, Beginning in 1988, the Council of the City of New York established a groundbreaking voluntary campaign finance reform program with the goal of increasing voter participation in elections and reducing the influence of large contributors and special interest groups through methods such as reducing campaign contribution limits and clarifying disclosure reports and other procedural issues; and

Whereas, The campaign finance reform program in the City of New York has hugely benefited the local electoral process, making it more transparent, more competitive, and a model of first-rate campaign finance for the nation; and

Whereas, Many of the municipal election reforms in the City of New York campaign finance program could benefit the people of the State of New York in the selection and election process for seats in the state judiciary by making those races more transparent and more competitive; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York urges the New York State Legislature to pass legislation reforming the present judicial election process by (i) establishing a voluntary Campaign Finance Program for all judicial candidates, (ii) requiring all judicial candidates, whether inside or outside such system, to disclose contributions and expenditures and (iii) requiring the New York State Board of Elections to publish a meaningful and objective voters guide for all judicial elections.

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