



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo statement on public campaign finance commission

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November 25, 2019

ISSUE:

- [Campaign Finance Reform](#)
- [Public Financing Political Campaigns](#)
- [Small donor matching](#)

New York State Senate Deputy Minority Leader Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, issued the following statement regarding the state's public campaign finance commission tasked with implementing a taxpayer-funded campaign finance system:

"There were a number of reasons why I opposed this year's state budget. One such reason was that it established a public financing commission made up of political appointees that were granted the authority to implement a system of providing money to political campaigns wholly funded by taxpayers. While the budget provided \$100 million for this endeavor, also known as "welfare for politicians," early estimates and the formula the commission released to the public indicate that the amount of funding that needs to be allocated for this initiative could rise to almost a quarter billion in taxpayer dollars.

In 1989, New York City implemented a small donor matching funds program that provide candidates with \$6 for every \$1 donated by a city resident. This program, which serves as a model for the campaign finance system that is being proposed across the state, was intended to empower small donors and reduce the influence of special interests in elections. However, we continue to see New York City candidates associated with scandals related to this financing system. Further, the campaign finance changes instituted in New York City have not had the desired affect when it comes to making people more engaged in the electoral process, nor has it prevented large-dollar donors from influencing elections. In fact, independent expenditures known as Super PACs have seen their influence and spending grow.

I am not opposed to reforming government and maximizing democracy. However, at a time when the state is facing a potential \$6.1 billion budget deficit, I feel that it would be more prudent for our state to use those taxpayer dollars to address areas of greater need such as education, infrastructure and other important areas. All New Yorkers, especially those who live upstate, are facing significant pressures. They should not see their hard-earned money allocated to politicians for their own welfare and negative advertising, especially those who abdicated their responsibility to a commission."