



Brennan Center for Justice
Center for Government Research
Center for Medical Consumers
Citizen Action
Citizens for a Better New York
Citizens Union of the City of New York
Clean and Healthy New York
Common Cause/NY
Consumers Union
Democracy Matters
Demos: A Network for Ideas and Action
Hunger Action Network of New York State
Interfaith Alliance of Rochester
Interfaith Impact of New York State
League of Women Voters of New York State
Learning Disabilities Association of New York State
New York Civic
New York Environmental Law & Justice Project
New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG)
Regional Plan Association
Transportation Alternatives
Urban Justice Center
Women's City Club of New York

(List in formation)

Albany on the Record is produced by Reinvent Albany

Our organizations write to urge your attendance at a statewide, nonpartisan reform event to be held in Albany on **May 5th**. The event, "Albany On-The-Record," will be an opportunity for New Yorkers to hear from the state's leading political figures on how they propose to address the staggering number of scandals and controversies plaguing the state.

New Yorkers are fed up. Scandals have driven from office Governor Spitzer, Comptroller Hevesi, Senate Majority Leader Bruno and a growing number of state legislators. Some elected officials are currently under investigation. Many of these abuses of power are rooted in the absence of effective and independent ethics and fiscal watchdogs, tough ethics laws and transparency in government.

Our organizations believe that state officials must respond with concrete reforms to show the public that they have gotten the message and are working to bolster confidence in state government. While our organizations may have differing views on the following issues, we believe that New Yorkers are entitled to hear how you intend to address the following topics:

Restore the public's trust:

- What will you do to restore the public's trust in their elected officials?
- What will you do to ensure that New York has independent and effective ethics, lobbying and campaign finance oversight?
- What will you do to ensure that the state's redistricting process is fair? Do you believe that the current system should be changed and if so, how?
- Please explain your position regarding the current system of allocating legislative resources, including distributions of "member items." How would you change or improve that system?
- Do you believe that the rules of the legislature are sufficiently transparent, accountable, and allow for adequate public input? If not, what will you do to change that system?

Reform the state's finances:

- The Comptroller has identified over 1,300 public authorities, benefit corporations and other quasi-governmental borrowing entities. What is your position regarding consolidation of these entities and how would you institute it?
- What steps, if any, would you support to ensure independent, non-partisan oversight of the state's finances?
- Regarding the amount of information on state agencies' spending, what information should be made available publicly on the Internet and what measures will you institute to make such information available?

Curb the power of special interests:

- What measures, if any, would you propose to reduce the influence of those with business before government – lobbyists and those receiving government contracts – on legislation and public policy?
- The US Supreme Court has ruled that corporations of all types can spend an unlimited amount of money, including from their general treasuries, on the candidates of their choice, as long as they do not coordinate with those candidates. Should such spending be publicly disclosed in the same manner as other forms of campaign spending?
- That US Supreme Court decision bolstered the campaign spending of big donors. What steps should be taken, if any, to bolster the role of small donors in the campaign finance system?
- New York has the highest campaign contribution limits of any state that has limits. What is your position, if any, regarding reducing the allowable amount of campaign contributions?

For more information about any of these issues, please contact Bill Mahoney with NYPIRG at (518) 436-0876 x254 or wmahoney@nypirg.org.