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Featuring Activist

DENNIS BURKE

On Getting Special Interest Money
Out of State Elections

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**DRUM
MAJOR**
INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC
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THE DRUM MAJOR INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY
MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS SERIES

**GETTING SPECIAL INTEREST MONEY
OUT OF STATE ELECTIONS**

SPEAKERS:

DENNIS BURKE

Activist

HON. LIZ KRUEGER

New York State Senate

CHARLIE KING

National Director, National Action Network

JESSICA WISNESKI

Clean Money, Clean Elections Coordinator,
Citizen Action Network of New York

Introduction by **WILLIAM WACHTEL**

Chairman, Drum Major Institute for Public Policy

Moderated by **ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER**

Executive Director, Drum Major Institute for Public Policy

ABOUT DMI'S "MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS" SERIES:

Never content just to argue theory, DMI provides a platform for policymakers who have successfully worked for social and economic fairness in our public institutions. For far too long the conservative right has defined the limits of what is "possible" in society and politics. The "Marketplace of Ideas" shows that we can transcend these artificial boundaries: it is possible to be progressive, practical, and effective. Since its inception we've heard from a wide range of speakers, including Congresswoman Hilda Solis, who authored the nation's first environmental justice law; Minnesota Attorney General Lori Swanson, who initiated tough standards to crack down on predatory mortgage lending; Dallas District Attorney Craig Watkins, who transformed the prosecutors' role to include a focus on exonerating the innocent; and Maine State Rep. Sharon Treat, who passed legislation increasing access to affordable prescription drugs.

PANELISTS AND SPEAKERS

DENNIS M. BURKE helped organize Arizona's successful ballot initiative campaign to provide public funds to candidates who agree to limit their spending and refuse all special interest campaign donations. The initiative passed in 1998. Currently, many top state officials have run and won using the "Clean Elections" program. In 2000, Burke organized a successful ballot initiative to create a politically balanced citizen commission to draw the boundaries of political districts in Arizona, removing that power from incumbent legislators. Also in 2000, he organized the national grassroots support for campaign finance reform at the federal level. His partner in that effort was 90 year-old Doris "Granny D" Haddock, who walked across the U.S. to promote the reform. They co-authored a book on the subject, published in 2001 by Random House. In 2003, he worked with peace groups in the Northeast to organize protests in major cities against the then-imminent invasion of Iraq by the U.S. Later in 2003, he organized an effort in 13 swing states to register working women and housing project residents to vote. In 2004 he managed the U.S. Senate campaign of his friend, Doris Haddock in New Hampshire. The incumbent Republican senator would otherwise have run unopposed. Of all the swing states that had swung to Bush in 2000, New Hampshire was the only state to swing to the Democrats in 2004, and the Haddock campaign was credited with part of that success. In 2005, Burke was the strategy consultant for the successful defeat of an anti-gay marriage amendment in Arizona. It remains the only state to turn down an anti-gay marriage ballot amendment. In 2006 he returned to the issue of coal and global warming, working for some months in West Virginia. He co-wrote the memoir of the sole survivor of the Sago Mine disaster. Presently, at the behest of Random House, he is co-writing the memoir of a Darfur refugee. Since 1985, he has served as the president of the Community Housing Partnership in Phoenix, which houses some three hundred otherwise homeless families each night.

HON. LIZ KRUEGER was first elected to the New York State Senate in a Special Election in February 2002. She is currently the Chair of Minority Program Development, and the ranking Democratic member of the Senate Standing Committee on Housing, Construction and Community Development. Senator Krueger is a strong advocate for tenants' rights, affordable housing, improved access to health care, prescription drug coverage and social services, more open government and campaign finance reform, more equitable funding for public education, and animal welfare. As Chair of the Senate Minority Task Force on Legislative and Budgetary Reform, Senator Krueger has been a leader in the fight for a more democratic and deliberative legislative process in the Senate. She has authored numerous pieces of reform legislation, including a bill that would tighten up New York's lax campaign finance laws and define how campaign contributions can be spent. Senator Krueger has dedicated her career to issues relating to poverty, and she is a nationally recognized expert on the problems of hunger and homelessness, and the lack of affordable housing, healthcare,

and job training. For 15 years, Senator Krueger was the Associate Director of the Community Food Resource Center (CFRC) where she was responsible for directing the organization's efforts to expand access to government programs for low-income New Yorkers. She helped monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of Federal and State programs in New York City. Prior to joining CFRC, Senator Krueger was the founding Director of the New York City Food Bank, building that organization into one that now serves over 1,100 emergency food programs, senior centers, day-care centers, and other community-based programs. She also served as Chair of the New York City Food Stamp Task Force, Co-Facilitator of the New York City Welfare Reform Network, and on the board of the City-Wide Task Force on Housing Court.

CHARLIE KING has dedicated over twenty years of his life serving New York in both the private and public sectors. In 2006 King ran unsuccessfully for New York State Attorney General and then served as Chair of Attorney General Andrew Cuomo's Transition Committee on Civil Rights. Recently King assumed the role of National Director for National Action Network, one of the nation's leading civil rights organizations. Currently King has a private political, governmental and corporate consulting business, CGK Partners. Public education has been a passion of King and one of his career successes was to settle a class action lawsuit with the Department of Education in New York City that he initiated on behalf of children trapped in failing schools across the state. Appointed by President Clinton in 2000 to serve as top official for the New York and New Jersey region of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), King monitored over \$3.2 billion in federal funds and managed over 500 individuals while protecting worker's rights and wages and revitalizing business in upstate New York. King's legal experience spans over fifteen years. While Of Counsel at Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson, King focused on commercial litigation and directed the firm's pro-bono program. King also served as a lawyer to Mayor David Dinkins' Mollen Commission. Internationally, King was selected to serve as an election observer in South Africa during Nelson Mandela's run for President in 1994. As CEO from 2003-2006 to Praxis, a \$9 million not-for-profit housing organization, which faced allegations of mismanagement prior to his arrival; King stabilized and restored it to health. King has always been active in his community. He served as President of the Westside Crime Prevention Program on the Upper West Side of Manhattan and currently serves on the board of the Anti-Defamation League.

JESSICA WISNESKI is the Campaigns Director of Citizen Action of New York, a statewide membership organization that fights for social, economic, racial and environmental justice. Jessica kicked off Citizen Action's four-year campaign to pass Clean Elections in New York two years ago. In that time, she has worked with hundreds of grassroots leaders and volunteers in Citizen Action's seven regions across the state to implement the grassroots campaign necessary to win. Jessica has lead countless activists trainings, coordinated dozens of grassroots and direct lobby visits, media events, coalition building, highly successful public forums, bill drafting and much more. Before her work at Citizen Action, Jessica was the Field

Coordinator for Hawaii Clean Elections, Hawaii's coalition that works to pass and implement a Clean Elections system there. Jessica graduated from the State University at Albany's Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy in 2002. She got her start working on campaign finance and redistricting reform working for the New York Public Interest Research Group. Jessica also coordinates Citizen Action's up and coming Quality, Affordable, Health Care for ALL campaign.

Since 2002, **ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER** has led the effort to turn the Drum Major Institute, originally founded by an advisor to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the civil rights movement, into a progressive policy institute with national impact. Under Andrea's leadership as Executive Director, DMI has released several important policy papers to national audiences including: 'Congress at the Midterm: Their Middle-Class Record' and 'Principles for an Immigration Policy to Strengthen and Expand the American Middle Class.' Andrea studied public policy at the University of Chicago. Andrea has worked in various capacities to promote educational equity and youth empowerment. She directed a national campaign to engage college students in the discussion on the future of Social Security for the Pew Charitable Trusts, and served as Director of Public Relations of Teach For America before working as the education advisor to Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer. Andrea has been profiled in the *New York Times*, *New Yorker* magazine, *Latina Magazine* and in 'Hear us Now,' an award winning documentary about her tenure as the student member of the New York City Board of Education. She has appeared on the 'Lou Dobbs Tonight' show on CNN and has been published in *New York Newsday*, *Crain's New York Business*, *The Mississippi Sun Herald*, *New York Daily News*, *Alternet.com*, *Tom Paine.com*, *New York Sun*, *Colorlines Magazine*, *The Chief-Leader* and *City Limits magazine*. She is a contributor to The Huffington Post, on the Editorial Board of *The Nation* and was named a '40 under 40 Rising Star' by *Crain's New York Business*.

BILL WACHTEL Mr. Wachtel is founder of the Drum Major Institute for Public Policy. He is also the founding partner of Wachtel & Masyr, a law firm comprised of approximately 30 attorneys specializing in domestic and international business transactions and litigations. He is a graduate of the University of Vermont (B.A. 1975, magna cum laude) and Columbia University (J.D., 1979); Phi Beta Kappa; Harlan Fiske Scholar. Mr. Wachtel was the legislative assistant to United States Senator P.J. Leahy from 1974-75. He is a member of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York and the American Bar Association. Mr. Wachtel is also founder of the Why Tuesday? Campaign. Why Tuesday? is a bipartisan effort to increase voter participation in our electoral process by moving our federal Election Day from the first Tuesday in November to the first Saturday and Sunday of the month.

TRANSCRIPT

The transcript from this event has been edited for length and readability.

Internet links are provided in footnotes throughout this transcript as resources for readers seeking to better understand the policy discussion. While we hope they are helpful, the Drum Major Institute for Public Policy is not responsible for the content or continued functioning of these links.

BILL WACHTEL: Good morning. My name is Bill Wachtel. I'm the founder of the Drum Major Institute. I'm especially pleased to be here this Monday morning to welcome you all. Today we have a wonderful opportunity to once again hear from someone who has not only identified a problem, but set upon the task of making a difference. In fact, that's what has happened in the state of Arizona, and we have Dennis Burke to thank. The purpose of these roundtables, or this Marketplace of Ideas, is to bring people from other places in the country to talk about challenges they faced and to talk about the successes they had. Then, in turn, with a panel of New Yorkers, see whether or not the success in a state like Arizona can, in fact, be made to work here in the state of New York, and throughout the country. Now, the issue of voter turnout and Clean Elections is near and dear to me. The Drum Major Institute got its start in the fight back in the '60s. The Voting Rights Act of 1965¹ was, in some measure, one of the great successes of the Institute. Regrettably forty years later, we have an electorate that simply doesn't vote. Out of 172 nations around the world, America ranks 136.² This voting cycle will see presidential candidates running for office, spending over four billion dollars to pull a hundred million voters, which is forty dollars a voter. If indeed that is what our system's about, then it's broken. It's not only broken because money seems to have its way in the actual election process. People don't even have the opportunity to run for office. The first question that's asked of an ideal candidate with the greatest track record in the world is, "Can you raise the money?" Unfortunately, the skill sets and the relationships that enable people to raise the money frequently are the very traits that perhaps keep them from being great leaders. Mike Bloomberg is an example of somebody who didn't have to raise money.³ Whatever else you may think of him as an elected official, he seems not to have the disability of having gone through a process that in some measure is tainted. Dennis got fed up with what he saw in the state of Arizona, a state that was dominated by special interests in which candidates just didn't have a chance to be heard unless they had access to enormous sums of money. Dennis took it upon himself to make a difference and, in fact, that's who he is. His entire career has been spent trying to fix the system. He was a head of Common Cause⁴ in the state of Arizona. He also had a long, distinguished and active career

1 http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/intro/intro_b.htm

2 As of October, 2007, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance ranks the US as 139th out of 172 in voter turnout in all elections since 1945, with 48.3%. http://www.idea.int/vt/survey/voter_turnout_pop2.cfm

3 Mayor of New York City from 2001 to 2009, Michael Bloomberg's net worth is estimated at \$11.5 billion, making him the 25th richest person in the country. http://www.forbes.com/lists/2007/54/richest07_The-400-Richest-Americans_NameProper_2.html

4 Common Cause is a nonpartisan nonprofit advocacy organization working to make citizens' voices heard in the political process and to hold elected leaders accountable to the public interest. <http://www.commoncause.org/site/pp.asp?c=dkLNK1MQIwG&b=186966>

before that, and even since. In 2000 he organized another ballot initiative to create a nonpartisan redistricting process for Arizona.⁵ He worked with Doris Haddock, known as “Granny D.,”⁶ the ninety year-old great-grandmother who walked across the country in support of federal campaign finance reform.⁷ He even managed her 2004 race in New Hampshire. Dennis is going to share with all of us just what it takes to make a difference. The Arizona law, which he’ll describe in much greater detail, is really quite remarkable, because it enables the system to invite candidates to run without having to, in essence, tax anyone. Novel and creative, Dennis will help us understand just how it works. After we hear from Dennis we’re going to be listening to a panel of distinguished members of our community: State Senator Liz Krueger,⁸ who has worked tirelessly for legislative and electoral reform; Charlie King, who’s the executive director of the National Action Network⁹ and Jessica Wisneski of Citizen Action New York.¹⁰ In their conversation, in their dialogue, hopefully we all see the glimmer of hope that, in this state, which ironically has some of the most lax and most regressive election finance rules, maybe we can make a difference. So it’s an honor to say to Dennis, welcome. And Dennis, the podium is yours. Thank you.

DENNIS BURKE: Thank you, Bill. I get way too much credit for what happened in Arizona. As those of you who work on the left side of the aisle know, it’s absolute poison to take too much credit for any reform. In fact, I don’t deserve the credit for starting a program in Arizona. In fact, Arizona does not deserve the credit for starting the program in Arizona, the state of Maine does, and the reformers there do.¹¹ Followed by the state of Vermont.¹² We followed suit. But if you want to run for the legislature today in Arizona, you need to find a little over two hundred people in your community who think enough of you to give you a five-dollar contribution. And with those two hundred and ten five dollar contributions, the state will finance the rest of your campaign. If you want to run for governor, you’re going to need a little over four thousand five dollar contributions, and you will get up to \$1.6 million for your campaign to run for governor. Right now our governor, Janet Napolitano,¹³ has won using the program. Most of the line officers of the state have won using the program. When you take the money you agree to some debates. You agree not to take any other money and not to spend any other money, including your own. And the

5 Proposition 106 created a 25 member redistricting commission with partisan and nonpartisan members. <http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/departments/scr/redist/red2000/apecomsn.htm> For more on the campaign, see http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=nicholas_stephanopoulos

6 <http://www.grannyd.com/about-grannyd.html>

7 They co-authored two books; the 2001 *Granny D: Walking Across America in my Ninetieth Year*, and the 2003 *Granny D: You’re Never Too Old to Raise a Little Hell*. <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/search-handle-uri/103-7317112-5655835?%5Fencoding=UTF8&search-type=ss&index=books&field-author=Doris%20Haddock>

8 <http://www.lizkrueger.com/>

9 http://www.nationalactionnetwork.net/html/about_us.html#3

10 <http://www.citizenactionny.org/cmce/cmceindex.html>

11 In 1996, Maine voters passed the Clean Elections Act by referendum, providing public funding to candidates who collect a minimum number of \$5 contributions. <http://www.newrules.org/gov/cleanME.html>

12 In 1997, the Vermont legislature approved public financing, without matching funds, for gubernatorial candidates. In 2006, the Supreme Court struck down Vermont’s spending and contribution limits. http://www.nvri.org/campaignspending/docs/supreme_court_analysis_randall_v_sorrell_070506_revised.pdf

13 <http://www.governor.state.az.us/>

program is not simple. It's a complex program, but fairness is rarely simple. I was in a candidates' forum in Sun City, Arizona, a retirement community, shortly after the program was up and in place. There were about six or seven would-be candidates who were speaking to the group, and they all wanted to be on the ballot. There were probably enough people in the room to put them on the ballot. There were probably about two hundred retirees in the room and a lot of them had their five-dollar bills in their hand looking for whom to support.

And these were the new kingmakers of Arizona politics. It wasn't the realtors for whom I'd worked for many years. It wasn't the trial lawyers. It was a roomful of retirees, who were impressed or not impressed with the individual speakers and what they had to say about their community. It was a great moment for me,

because it felt like the people had their democracy back again. It was particularly satisfying to me because my career before that had been working for the real estate and construction industries, and I was a guy handing out those checks. When my interest took me in another direction, into affordable housing and homeless issues, and I didn't have those checks to pass out anymore, I was out of the clan for sure. There's a kinship system between elected officials, lobbyists and wealthy interests. And I was out of the family. I saw the problem, and I saw why homeless issues weren't getting addressed: It had to do with campaign finance reform.

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—Arizona Activist Dennis Burke

Progressive things pass in Arizona and people think, "My goodness, how did that happen?" But Arizona is, in fact, a child of the Progressive Era. We became a state in 1912 in the heat of the Progressive Movement. We were denied statehood twice because our proposed constitution was way too liberal.

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Now, sometimes Arizona surprises people. Things, progressive things, pass in Arizona and people think, "My goodness, how did that happen?" But Arizona is, in fact, a child of the Progressive Era¹⁴. We became a state in 1912 in the heat of the Progressive Movement. We were denied statehood twice because our proposed constitution was way too liberal. It gave much too much power to the people in the

eyes particularly of then-President Taft. In 1911, we invited ex-president Roosevelt to come dedicate a very large dam that we had built and dedicated to him. A man of this city, obviously, and probably of this club, he came out. It was a great day in Arizona when he came to dedicate the dam, because he was well loved in the West, of course. We cried on his shoulder a little bit about our problems with statehood, and he said, "Well, why don't you just take all the wild stuff out of your constitution, become a state, and then next election, put it all back in?" Which is exactly what we

14 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Progressive_era

did. We have all those powers now, and we're a state. He got his name on the dam, by the way, because he sent us the federal loan money when he was President. He did that because we sent him all the cowboys when he needed Rough Riders. That was his "thank you" present to Arizona, and it really was a key to our statehood.

I'm going to get into this background a little bit, so you understand where some of our reforms come from. One of the fellows who organized the Rough Riders to send to Roosevelt was a guy named Buckey O'Neil.¹⁵ He was a friend and business partner of my great-grandfather in Arizona, so this is kind of a family story, too. And a great gambler. He became fast friends with Roosevelt on the troop training and on the boat over to Cuba, but he was killed the day before the battle of San Juan Hill. When he was leaving Phoenix there was a great going away party for the Rough Riders. Buckey said, "Who wouldn't die for another star on the flag?" so they knew what they were doing. They were trying to trade some glory for statehood, and ultimately they got their wish. But the reason I bring up Buckey, is that he ran for office in about 1886 in Arizona. His campaign ad, I think, is the gold standard for Clean Elections. I'm going to read you his campaign ad, which was a little wordy but worth it because I think it'll change your life to hear it.

"A resident of Arizona for ten years, not because I was forced to come here or lack the means of leaving. I have, during that period, fully realized that men are elected to public office in Arizona not so much on account of their possessing preeminent qualifications but more on account of a liberal endowment of that valuable article commonly called gall, and having by long connection with the territorial press," he was a reporter at the time, "gathered more of that commodity than anything else. I have concluded to shy my castor into the political arena to realize something on it. I do so entirely on my own responsibility. No anxious public, nor the solicitation of many friends nor the wishes of many prominent citizens have made the slightest effort to bluff me into it. To be frank, it is not a case where the office is wearing itself out for the man. Not much. Here it is, the man wearing himself out hunting the office for the simple reason that it is a soft berth with a salary of two thousand per annum attached. While in the way of special qualifications I have no advantage over seventy-five percent of my fellow citizens in this county, yet I believe I am fully competent to discharge all the duties incident to the office in an efficient manner if elected. If you coincide in this opinion, support me if you see fit. If you do not, you will be no means jeopardize the safety of the universe by defeating me."

So he won. He won because then, as now, in Arizona as in New York, people really value honesty and candor. They don't like people talking out of both sides of their mouth, and people are smart enough to know that when they see it. He did a great job in office, by the way. A couple years later, he ran for sheriff and won by a huge majority. He only won by two votes that first time. He was carried through Prescott, Arizona, which was then our capitol, with a torchlight parade, and taken home to his wife to sober him up. But he did a very good job. That spirit of candor in elections

15 http://www.sharlot.org/archives/history/dayspast/text/1997_07_27.shtml

is behind the progressive spirit in Arizona. Another reason why I like to think about Buckley and those days is because they used to put up a speaking platform in the park. They had candidates speak, and had debates before the election. Who put up that platform? Who put out the posters for the candidates? The people did. The people owned the elections. Today, you know, the speaking platform is the television ad. But if it's going to be the people's election, the people have to provide for the election. And that's what we did in Arizona, following suit, after Maine and Vermont.

In 1991, an Arizona county attorney found himself with two suitcases full of drug money that they got in a sting, and he wondered if he could use it to buy the Arizona legislature. He set up a fancy office in downtown Phoenix, and the guy used the name of Tony Vincent, who could have been played by Joe Pesci really; gold chain and pinky ring. He invited the legislators up to this beautiful office to see if they could find it in their hearts to make casino gambling legal in Arizona's convention hotels. "And by the way, we have something to show our appreciation for your vote: this nice envelope here on the desk." Someone took the envelope, not knowing there were cameras, of course, in the heating vents. Careers were ruined. Some went to jail. It was called "AzScam."¹⁶ Of course, it was in the news, and still it's part of Arizona's cultural history. Had we as the reform community been ready at that moment with Clean Elections, we could have passed it in ten minutes. I think lesson number one for reformers, is that you need to have your patented cure and your medicine all ready to go for that magic moment when political pestilence strikes again. Because it always does. But we weren't ready with Clean Elections then. The opportunity was almost wasted, but not quite. In '96, as you know, creative reform was in Maine and Vermont. In '97, Vermont passed their program to publicly finance elections and electrified the reform community. Ellen Miller at that time was working with the Center for Responsive Politics¹⁷ in Washington. She saw this as the way forward. She left the Center and started a group called Public Campaign,¹⁸ which is now sort of the flagship organization nationally for this issue. She met with some Arizona reformers shortly after the Vermont victory, and we were off to the races. Ellen raised about a million dollars for our Arizona effort, which was a lot of money for us. If we were doing it today we would probably need twice that amount. We raised some money in Arizona, but nothing to match what Ellen did for us. The Moyers family actually opened up a lot of doors for her on that issue, including

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16 Over 16 months "Vincent," ex-mobster Joseph Stedino, paid out \$370,000 in "bribes," resulting in the indictment of lobbyists and legislators, 7 of whom stepped down. <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,972359,00.html?promoid=googlep>

17 <http://www.opensecrets.org/>

18 <http://www.publiccampaign.org/>

The problem, as I think you know, with the lobby-related donation is that it's an investment. It's an investment that has a tremendous return. Groups from Common Cause to the Cato Institute have suggested that it's about a ten to one return, meaning taxpayers are paying for the election, but are not getting a very efficient return on our investment. Instead of the public paying directly, we're letting lobbyists pay for it. Then, we are paying back, in terms of subsidies, environmental waivers and work place safety waivers, about ten dollars for every one we think we're saving by not funding our own elections.

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the funding of her own organization. AzScam was still in Arizona's news cycle then, because there were always appeals, and there were people getting out of jail, and there were people trying to get off the hook. It was still part of the news cycle, but the wounds were starting to heal over a little bit. Our job was to, excuse the expression, pick at that scab a little bit and freshen the wound. We conducted an audit of all the money going into the Arizona legislature. We looked at how many of the dollars were connected with very visible strings to selfish interests that wanted something for that contribution. About

seventy-seven percent of the dollars were very clearly linked to lobbyist interests. That audit we used to launch the campaign. We were back in the headlines for the next several days, and we were off to a good start. The problem, as I think you know, with the lobby-related donation is that it's an investment. It's an investment that has a tremendous return. Groups from Common Cause to the Cato Institute have suggested that it's about a ten to one return,¹⁹ meaning taxpayers are paying for the election, but are not getting a very efficient return on our investment. Instead of the public paying directly, we're letting lobbyists pay for it. Then, we are paying back, in terms of subsidies, environmental waivers and work place safety waivers, about ten dollars for every one we think we're saving by not funding our own elections. That was easy research to do, by the way, even in 1998, and today it's totally a breeze. There's two web sites: one is called followthemoney.org which tracks all the state legislative campaigns; and there's a federal website called opensecrets.org that will track all of your federal candidates and Members of Congress. We launched our campaign in 1998 with that audit, and never looked back.

Lesson number two, I think, is that the chronic, business-as-usual political injustices need to be rendered acute when you're ready to make your move as a reform community. There's lots of ways to do that, but an audit is an awfully good way. If you can actually tell the taxpayers what they're spending for the existing system, they will be shocked, they will be surprised, and they will welcome your reform. I think in New York you will find that New Yorkers are paying an awful lot. I don't know how they're paying it. I don't know if it's

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¹⁹ Both Common Cause and the Cato Institute, a conservative think-tank, have reached similar conclusions. <http://www.commoncause.org/site/pp.asp?c=dkLNK1MQIwG&b=190066#Money in Politics>, <http://www.cato.org/index.html>

in highway contracts, I don't know if it's in mismanaged funds, but there are an awful lot of ways that the taxpayers are now paying for those contributions. A good example in Arizona was for I think seven years, the reform community marched for an MLK holiday and didn't have much luck in the legislature. All of a sudden the Super Bowl Committee was coming to town, and Arizonans wanted to look cool. We put it on the ballot at that point, and it passed by sixty percent. Knowing the right moment, I think, is crucial. By the way, to put this on your "Isn't that funny that it could happen in Arizona" list, Arizona remains the only state that's passed an MLK holiday by popular vote.

Leadership in a reform is always a risky business, particularly on the left side of the aisle. You reformers know that our usual groups are about as leadership-averse as a roomful of James Deans. That's a little less the case in Arizona, where we have to win because we don't have nice places

like this to come lick our wounds. We just have to get it done, so we're a little less communitarian and a little more visceral, I think. It's difficult though to get reformers on the same page in any environment. Part of that problem, I think, is sometimes political groups tend to act the opposite of what they propose to stand for. If you want a wonderfully vicious battle to the death, join the board of a peace group. If you want a lovely afternoon with great friends, join a gun club. So we have to deal with that. We have our issues. When I became director of Arizona Common Cause, our group had recently bowed out of the Clean Elections effort, because their nightly meetings were just a slugfest. It didn't seem like they were going anywhere, and their proposed bill, about eighty pages long, had to be on the clipboard for people to sign. We needed two hundred thousand signatures. We just didn't think it was going to happen, but it was an opportunity, and the timing was still okay with the AzScam scandal. We did get involved, and we linked that effort up with the best resources we could find; the best attorneys. We linked them up with the Brennan Center²⁰ here at NYU to vet the bill. It's a terrific resource, by the way, as I'm sure you know. We whittled down the bill to the point where it would fit on a clipboard. We took it to ex-governors, editorial writers, all the progressive lawyers we could find, and we finally got it moving. The newspaper was never on our side, but we did interesting stuff. For example, the editor of the *Arizona Republic*, a lady named Keven Willey, didn't quite like it. However, she loved Molly Ivins,²¹ so we brought Molly in to talk with her. They never endorsed because Keven couldn't get her bosses to agree to it, but, boy, that was the softest non-endorsement you ever saw. It was a lovely editorial: "If Arizona wants to do this, I guess it's okay." So that was very important to us. The other bygone was John McCain,²² because he's Mr. Campaign Finance Reform. So

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—Arizona Activist Dennis Burke

20 <http://www.brennancenter.org/>

21 Ivins (1944-2007) was an award-winning populist syndicated columnist and author. http://www.thenation.com/doc/20070219/molly_ivins

22 McCain is a Republican Senator and Presidential candidate from Arizona. <http://mccain.senate.gov>

I met with McCain, and he had been against public financing of elections. He no longer is. He's now a supporter of them. But back then he was against it, and I asked him to stay out of the fight. Common Cause was working with him on the McCain-Feingold Bill.²³ I was doing a lot. In fact I was camping out of the other center's office, John Kyl,²⁴ trying to get him to go with McCain. I sat down with McCain and asked him if he wouldn't just call this a state's rights issue, he's a federal guy, and stay out of it. Interestingly, this is the first time I had really met with him, and on his desk was a clipping. This was '98, the centennial of the Spanish-American War, and the Arizona Republic had run this big long piece about Teddy Roosevelt, the dam, statehood, Cuba, and about how all those issues were linked. McCain is a big, big, big Teddy Roosevelt fan. I had written that article, and he knew it. He pushed it across the desk at me. The article had this kind of sad ending, saying that the Arlington graves of guys like Buckey O'Neil and the Rough Riders had kind of grown over. The brass plaques were a little lonely and people had kind of forgotten. He passed me this article and he said, "Dennis, I want you to know that I've had all those graves cleaned up." Great. I said, "Does that mean you can stay out of this fight for us?" And he just smiled. I knew that meant "Yes". It was interesting too, though. We had some campaign managers Ellen's group forced on us, and that was good, because I was not going to be campaign manager. I know my limitations, and campaign management is not something I can do very well. This young guy came out, and our alternative newspaper interviewed him. They asked him why McCain had not endorsed our bill and he said, "Well, McCain's not really a reformer. He just got caught in the Keating Five Savings and Loan scandal²⁵ and he covers himself with his campaign finance reform stuff." Well, John read that, and I was giving my son a driving lesson at the time and my cell phone rang. I had to hold it out here. Austin, my son, pulled over, and he said, "Who is that?" I said, "That's your senator." He was livid. About an hour later I called McCain back and I told him the truth. The board of Arizona Common Cause had just named him Arizona public official of the year for his leadership on campaign finance reform. He said, "Thank you, Dennis" and hung up. He stayed on the farm for us and, had he not, we definitely would have lost because we only own by one percent.

To pass a reform... you need a crisis... We did the best we could...In Clean Elections, you have to get the other side angry at you. You've got to get the big dogs to come off the porch and attack you in public, so the public can make a moral decision. That's a difficult thing sometimes. The states where I've seen it fail, I think, were the states where they were afraid to go after the Anheuser-Busches or the big dogs in their state, instead of actually taking them on in a way that the public could emotionally engage with the issue.

—Arizona Activist Dennis Burke

Most of the four things you need to pass a reform we had in place in Arizona. You need a good reform measure: we finally had it. It has to be well vetted by the best

23 For more on campaign finance reform, see: <http://www.opensecrets.org/news/campaignfinance/index.asp>

24 <http://kyl.senate.gov/>

25 The largest of the savings and loan bailouts, Lincoln S&L cost taxpayers \$2.6 billion. McCain received \$112,000 in campaign contributions and numerous other gifts from its owner, Charles Keating. Four democratic senators were also implicated. <http://www.slate.com/id/1004633/>

attorneys, politicians, political operatives you could find. We did that. Second, you need a crisis. There's always a crisis. Sometimes it's under the surface, sometimes people have grown used to it, but you have to make it visible again. That's what Gandhi and King were so good at: they made it visible again. They confronted it. They made it bleed again. We did that as best we could. Third, you need resources: volunteers, of course, but mostly a big bunch of money to make it work. We had what we needed for that, we thought. And fourth, you need tough creative leadership, and that's always the hardest. I think it's very difficult in the reform community, because the kind of people who are good at running reform organizations are good consensus builders. But to run a good political campaign, you kind of need a jerk. And sometimes we don't know who that is. We don't know who could bring that in. In Clean Elections, you have to get the other side angry at you. You've got to get the big dogs to come off the porch and attack you in public, so the public can make a moral decision. That's a difficult thing sometimes. The states where I've seen it fail, I think, were the states where they were afraid to go after the Anheuser-Busch²⁶ or the big dogs in their state, instead of actually taking them on in a way that the public could emotionally engage with the issue. You've got to throw some rocks, I think, at those dogs. I was lucky enough to be on a statewide panel show on our PBS affiliate in Arizona when we were doing all this. A member of the legislature was on the show as well, and was starting to talk down about our horrible reform. I had the file folder on him and I said, "Well, Senator, you represent a part of Mesa, Arizona that's had some cancer clusters here, and you've taken all this money from the dry cleaning industry. You've sponsored the bills that have sort of pulled the rug out from under the enforcement on these benzene things, so how can you say we don't need this program?" He shut up, and no member of the legislature ever opened up their mouth again. In other words, you've got to confront them. Any time they stick their head up you've got to shoot it off, just like a turkey-shoot. You need people, I think, and you need a campaign that has all its information together, and is willing to call them the way they see them. Celinda Lake,²⁷ a lot of you probably know the name, is a really wonderful pollster usually working on the Democrat side of things. She came out at the beginning of our campaign and said, "Well, fifty-one percent of Arizonans will vote for your issue." Now, that's horrible, because you really want to start a reform campaign with about sixty percent of approval. Then you're going to get knocked down by the other side. Fifty-one percent is almost undoable, but she said, "If you're careful you might be able to come off with it." She recommended, no advertising until the very end, and then pop up with a kind of an apple pie campaign. And to keep everybody's heads down with using the kind of information that we did use, so that those who have been part of the system would be called to account if they tried to defend the system. We did that and, in fact, we won with the same fifty-one percent. Our allies were the usual bunch. The League of

26 Beverage manufacturer Anheuser-Busch has funded opposition to Clean Election reform in a number of states. For example, see http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=three_steps_forward_two_steps_back

27 Lake is a Democratic pollster and strategist focusing on female candidates and women's concerns. She has worked for AFL-CIO, SEIU, and NARAL, among others. <http://lakesnellperry.com/who/bios/lake.htm>

Women Voters was instrumental,²⁸ of course. They're marvelous, always. The labor unions were always getting the short stick at the legislature. Other reform rated groups: Citizen Action,²⁹ Acorn,³⁰ the NAACP,³¹ a lot of campus groups, National Council of La Raza,³² and of course, members of the Unitarian churches, who, like the League of Women Voters, will put on a box lunch or a nice event in hell if you ask

them to. They just want to know how many people you're expecting. We had really good soldiers for this fight. Our biggest enemies, we thought, would be the lobbyist gang at the Capitol, because with a few calls, they could raise any amount of money to have any kind of a campaign. You usually don't need much of a campaign to kill Clean Elections.

I mean, you could put up a little sign that

You usually don't need much of a campaign to kill Clean Elections. I mean, you could put up a little sign that says, "Money for politicians? Vote No!" You have to understand that they can come get you, and you have to be ready for them.

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says, "Money for politicians? Vote No!" You have to understand that they can come get you, and you have to be ready for them. But they were quiet. We thought they were going to have a big pop up campaign, too. Towards the very end, a few weeks before the election, in fact, one of the premier women lobbyists at the capitol started making those calls. I think she raised fifty thousand dollars. They put up some ads, but maybe we would have won be two percent instead of one percent. They were not very effective. During the next legislative session I talked to a friend of mine who's a gray haired lobbyist and, really, the premier lobbyist down there. I said, "Why did you guys let us do this? Why didn't you kill us?" And he said, "Dennis, the real lobbyists, the good guys," meaning himself, "We have an important story to tell at the legislature. We represent major industries. And we have important information for the legislature that they need to know. We're always going to be able to get in. We're always going to be heard." he said, "So we don't need that. And to tell you the truth, we're as sick of writing those checks as anybody else. Our heart wasn't in killing you." That sounds pretty warm and fuzzy, but the fact is, there's a kinship system under there that still needs to be addressed. But that's for another reform we'll talk about some day.

I was a member of a Rotary Club³³ back then, for no other reason than that my dad was and my grandfather was, and that it was kind of a fun thing to do on Fridays. I always sat at a table with a guy named Marc Spitzer³⁴ (no relation to your Spitzer). He was a Chairman of the Finance Committee in the Arizona Senate, and he didn't like what I was proposing. I talked to the Rotary Club about it, and of course I was in the community talking about it. He started calling me at the office late, he worked late and I worked late, about what a horrible thing this was going to be for Arizona.

28 <http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home>

29 <http://www.citizenactionny.org/>

30 <http://acorn.org/>

31 <http://www.naacp.org/home/index.htm>

32 <http://www.ncrl.org/>

33 <http://www.rotary.org/en/Pages/ridefault.aspx>

34 Marc Spitzer is now the Commissioner of the Federal Energy Regulatory Committee.

“Dennis, you guys have just got to pull this campaign right now,” and he had a lot of good reasons; a really smart guy. We kept our friendship up, but the calls got kind of nasty. About four months after our victory, he called up and said, “Can you drop by the office?” And I said, “Why don’t you come by my office?” He said, “I don’t think I should be seen by the Common Cause office.” I said, “Okay.” So I dropped by his office, and he said, “I’m leaving the Senate and I’m running for the Corporation Commissioner. The only people that are going to give me any money, and I’ve been trying, are the same utilities that I’m going to have to regulate as the Corporation Commissioner.” He said, “I can’t do that.” So he told me he was going to be the first to announce for a statewide race using Clean Elections. He did, and he won. He served with great distinction. He, by the way, was recently put on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission board, by President Bush. The only Bush appointee I’ve ever been excited about, but a good guy. He has gone all over the country, Marc has, talking up the Clean Election system. This is a good, solid Republican guy. He said, in a San Francisco Chronicle article, “The great benefit of the Clean Money, Clean Elections movement is that policy makers no longer have their hands tied by the campaign finance system. They’re free to exercise their judgment based on broad public interest, rather than have debate dictated by narrow special interest, or even by party leaders who control big purse strings.”

In fact, people from both parties started using the system. It’s now used on both sides of the aisle and by independents. A majority of the members of the Arizona legislature are there because they were elected under the Clean Election system: our governor, our attorney general, our treasurer, and our secretary of state. Most of the high officers of the state have used the program. It has constantly been attacked in the courts by people who don’t like it. The courts have constantly stood beside it. In this last legislative session almost unanimously, in a ninety member legislature, only two voted against a bill that dramatically upped the money that you receive as a Clean Elections candidate to fit today’s advertising costs and to streamline some of the paperwork procedures. It is popular. About fifty-nine percent of Arizonans support the program if you ask them in a real clear, straightforward, pollster way. You can ask them different ways: “Do you think politicians should get tax dollars?” And they’ll say “no” by probably an overwhelming majority. “Do you think special interests should run our elections?” would probably get the opposite swayed results. But if you ask them fairly, fifty-nine percent of them like the system and would vote for it if they had a chance to again.

For me, it's an issue of the commons. A lot of you are probably aware of how we privatize everything in this country. We've privatized our elections. We've turned it into a gated community. And Clean Elections – for Arizona and for Vermont and for Maine, and for other states and cities that are trying – it is a way back to the commons. It's not easy. It's a complex system, but it works.

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For me, it's an issue of the commons. A lot of you are probably aware of how we privatize everything in this country. We've privatized our elections. We've turned it into a gated community. And Clean Elections – for Arizona and for Vermont and for Maine, and for other states and cities that are trying – it is a way back to the commons. It's not easy. It's a complex system, but it works. Doug Quelland³⁵ is a member of the legislature with a big handlebar white moustache, and very Republican. His favorite moment in the last session was kicking out a lobbyist from the pharmaceutical company. Literally kicking him out of his office, and saying, "I don't have to worry about it. I'm Clean Elections." Thank you.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Thank you everyone, for coming. My name is Andrea Batista Schlesinger, and I work for the Drum Major Institute. We have a fantastic panel here to talk about what happened in Arizona, and what the implications are for New York. The purpose of our Marketplace series is always twofold: one, to demonstrate that government can play a positive role in people's lives; and two, to inspire replication. But before we can replicate, we need to know if people want replication. I'm going to first ask State Senator Liz Krueger. Senator Krueger was first elected to the New York Senate in a special election in February 2002. She's currently the chair of Minority Program Development, the ranking Democratic member of the Senate Standing Committee on Housing Construction and Community Development, and she's been a leader in the fight for a more democratic and deliberative legislative process in the Senate, which we can only imagine has been a frustrating fight. Senator Krueger, the leader of you body said, and I quote, that "New Yorkers don't give two hoots about campaign finance reform." Besides the obvious, that we have a hundred people here on a Monday morning at eight AM, and before we can get into the "how," let's go into the "if." Do New Yorkers care about campaign finance reform?

SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER: For the record, I believe you meant Joe Bruno³⁶ when you used that quote.

I often say in New York State we have an incumbent protection policy in place. The majority of legislators get reelected every two years no matter what they're doing, even if they've been indicted, in the case of New Yorkers on a few occasions.

—New York State Senator Liz Krueger

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Yes.

SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER: He's the leader I worked very hard to retire from the New York State Senate. But yes, he says that. I think that there is one of the challenges for us, and Dennis raised many of them, is actually showing elected officials that the

public does care enough about campaign finance reform and Clean Elections that it will actually hold us accountable for them. I think Dennis raised some interesting issues about why, if you think it through as an elected official, you could actually

35 Doug Quelland is an Arizona State Representative. <http://www.azleg.gov/MembersPage.asp?MemberID=79&Legislature=46>

36 Joe Bruno is the New York State Senate Majority Leader: <http://www.senatorbruno.com>

convince yourself you want this, even if the public is not clamoring for it. But being in elected office, the system that got you there wears on you. It can wear comfortably for you. I often say in New York State we have an incumbent protection policy in place. The majority of legislators get reelected every two years no matter what they're doing, even if they've been indicted, in the case of New Yorkers on a few occasions.

It is the challenge, I think, of convincing both electeds, but also convincing the public that, as Dennis challenged us at the end, to recognize we have privatized our elections. And to go back to Bill Wachtel's opening points, people aren't voting. I believe there is a direct correlation between the system we put in place for our election process and the fact that a larger and larger percentage of Americans are actually saying, "None of the above, thank you," every time we have an election cycle. We've got to change that dynamic for democracy.

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—New York State Senator Liz Krueger

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: I want to introduce Jessica Wisneski, who's the campaign director of Citizen Action of New York, a statewide membership organization that fights for social, economic, racial, and environmental justice. Jessica's the leading advocate, and kicked off Citizen Action's four year campaign to pass Clean Elections in New York a couple of years ago. Jessica, it's always fun for the Drum Major Institute when we have these speakers come from Arizona and Oklahoma and Minnesota to tell us how to do our business in the supposedly liberal New York. But can you give us a sense of where New York is in terms of campaign finance, and in terms of Clean Elections?

JESSICA WISNESKI: Sure. You know, Citizen Action has been talking about Clean Elections for over ten years now, even back in '98 when there was a push to change from the matching fund system here in New York City's Council and citywide races to a Clean Election system. Citizen Action collected over ninety thousand signatures and did a whole effort, and the New York City system was improved upon. The match was increased, but we've been waiting for another opportunity in New York. We knew that it would take a powerful force. Back in '98 when Arizona was doing its thing and he was running for attorney general, Governor Spitzer then said he supported full public financing; Clean Money, Clean Elections. Then in 2005, when he was running for governor, we thought, "That is a ticket right there." We worked hard. During his campaign, he agreed. He did support full public financing, and worked while he was campaigning to make sure he was talking about that support. Now, once in office, we all witnessed the fight in the first session for campaign finance reform. He did make it a major issue. In New York, it's twofold, because our current campaign finance laws are such a mess that we really need to Band-Aid up some of those holes. Then obviously, and this is really the key, we clearly need a whole new system. We've been working on legislation. We've had Clean Elections

legislation introduced. Assemblyman Ortiz from Brooklyn,³⁷ and then Senator Paterson, now Lieutenant Governor Paterson,³⁸ sponsored our legislation for many years. But for those many years, the Assembly always passed a matching funds bill. Now, we've been working on the bill and talking to our Assembly Members and Senators also about making the switch, and that matching funds is kind of an old-school system. What's happening in Arizona and Maine, and now Connecticut, who passed the law in 2005,³⁹ is a full public financing system. That's what's really going to make the difference. We have a tremendous grassroots effort growing and growing and growing. We do believe it will take a major shift in the New York State Senate to pass the law completely, and to make it a major election issue. It really is much different than Arizona, because it's not the public who has to vote for this in the voting box. It's the legislators themselves that need to pass the law. That's one of the greatest challenges.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Does everyone in the audience understand the difference between the match that many of us in New York City are familiar with, and totally clean, full public financing of elections? Does everyone understand that difference?

JESSICA WISNESKI: Let's first talk about Clean Elections, because we're proposing to do it a little bit differently than the way Arizona did. We are not Arizona, and we are definitely not Maine here in New York State. In Clean Elections, if you want to run for office, if you want to use the public financing system, as a candidate you have to go out there, collect the small donations from a set number of voters in your

A full public financing system. That's what's really going to make the difference. We have a tremendous grassroots effort growing and growing and growing. We do believe it will take a major shift in the New York State Senate to pass the law completely, and to make it a major election issue. It really is much different than Arizona, because it's not the public who has to vote for this in the voting box. It's the legislators themselves that need to pass the law. That's one of the greatest challenges.

—Jessica Wisneski, Citizen Action

district. In Arizona, it's five dollars. Here in New York, we're proposing between five dollars and a hundred dollars. You have to collect a certain amount of those donations. For Assembly, for example, it's four hundred. You would then prove that you are a viable candidate and qualified for the Clean Election system. Then you would stop all fund raising. You would not need to fund raise anymore, and you would get a set amount of money first for your primary, based on the number of enrolled voters in your district, and then

in the general election. If you're ever outspent by a non-participating opponent, or third parties like special interest money, the Swift boaters⁴⁰ coming after you, you would get additional public funds, up to a limit, to stay competitive. Those are the

37 <http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/?ad=051&sh=bio>

38 <http://www.ny.gov/governor/litgov/bio/index.html>

39 Connecticut passed a voluntary Clean Elections law in 2005, requiring candidates to raise \$15,000 in \$100 donations to receive a \$35,000 grant in the primaries, and \$85,000 grant in the general, and eligibility for matching funds. <http://www.commoncause.org/site/pp.asp?c=dkLNK1MQIwG&b=202895>

40 <http://dir.salon.com/story/opinion/conason/2004/05/04/swift/index.html>

basics of the Clean Election system. So you don't get all the public money in the world, but you do certainly get enough to be competitive in a race. We really did the research to figure out, how much that is. We asked legislators themselves, "How much does it cost you, on average, even when you have tough competition?"

Matching funds, here in New York City and in other states, require you to raise private money and then you get a public match. Here in New York, for example, any contribution up to two hundred and fifty dollars by a city resident is matched. You still have to constantly fund raise from start to finish, all the way to Election Day. It's about getting the big contributions, and you don't just get small donations. You go for the big contributions. Only the first two hundred and fifty is matched. So still, about two-thirds of the money within the City Council, even during in public funding system, is private money. It's really a very partial public system, unlike Clean Elections, that would be eighty-eight to ninety percent public funding. It's quite different.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: The stat that I found is that in New York City, the top six percent of donors contribute forty percent of the money.⁴¹ Even though there's a match, it's a totally different notion than people qualifying and then getting a bucket of public money and not having to fund raise.

JESSICA WISNESKI: And the public is throwing good money after bad there. You've got the special interest connection, and then you're giving them public dollars the rest of the way.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Let me introduce Charlie King, who has dedicated over twenty years of his life serving New York in both the public and private sectors. In 2006, King ran unsuccessfully for the New York State Attorney General, and then served as chair of Attorney General Andrew Cuomo's⁴² transition committee on civil rights. Recently, King assumed the role of National Director for the National Action Network, one of the nation's leading civil rights organizations. One of the really interesting findings from Arizona was that communities of color benefited in particular from publicly funded elections, because more candidates of color were able to run for office. Then, voter turnout in communities of color increased, in some studies. Do you think, for those reasons, publicly financed elections would be a benefit to New York?

CHARLIE KING: Well, I'd say a couple things. First of all, I have to dispute: I did not run unsuccessfully for attorney general. I was actually reelected a private citizen. And with an overwhelming mandate, I might add. I'm doing a hell of a job with the mandate.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: You are. We're happy to have you.

41 <http://www.citizenactionny.org/cmce/Dear%20colleague%20letter%20Final%20sent%20May%207th.pdf>

42 <http://www.oag.state.ny.us/>

CHARLIE KING: I just want to make sure. One of the reasons why I was reelected a private citizen was, I went to my good friend Andrea and asked her to run my campaign, and she said, “I’ve got things far more important to do with my life than to work on your campaign.”

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Now you’re getting all the tough questions.

If I didn’t have the loopholes, if you will, to compete monetarily with Andrew and with Mark, my campaign never would have gotten off the ground in the first place. I was able to raise money through LLC’s, through a lot of these loopholes. If you close up these loopholes, then basically, you’re going to have millionaires running. It’s really that simple. It would have been impossible for me to raise money to become even remotely credible in a race for attorney general, not because of my ideas, but because I have limited access to money.

—Charlie King

CHARLIE KING: But I want to say a couple things. Just as a candidate who ran statewide against two candidates who had an incredible wealth in a lot of different ways.⁴³ They had name recognition. To give you a sense of what my day was like, I spent about eighty percent of my time raising money. And I did a good job. I actually raised more money than anyone other than Andrew, who won, for attorney general. I raised more money than Mark Green,⁴⁴ whose family is not without considerable resources themselves, and put that money into the campaign. He was

also the mayoral candidate, as you know. In some ways, it was quite a feat to raise that amount of money. But it created such an imbalance for me, because to get out and get known was next to impossible. That is something that’s very important for people to realize: if you have candidates who don’t come from a positive position, and just by accident of birth, quite frankly, to be able to compete, money makes an incredible difference. If you don’t have it, you have to spend an inordinate amount of time to get it. I would respectfully disagree, and I’ve been thinking about this a little bit, and I’m glad that Senator Krueger is here. Band-Aids are actually not the solution. Andrea said for me to be controversial, and I’m going to be a little controversial. If I didn’t have the loopholes, if you will, to compete monetarily with Andrew and with Mark, my campaign never would have gotten off the ground in the first place. I was able to raise money through LLCs,⁴⁵ through a lot of these loopholes. If you close up these loopholes, then basically, you’re going to have millionaires running. It’s really that simple. It would have been impossible for me to raise money to become even remotely credible in a race for attorney general, not because of my ideas, but because I have limited access to money. If you look at the races now, and if you look at all of the fine elected officials on both sides of the aisle, quite frankly, you’ll see that it is mostly people who come from independent wealth. When you start talking about closing the loopholes, for people like me, whose parents were both social workers, the only way I could compete is if I could

43 In 2006, King ran against Mark Green and Andrew Cuomo, among other candidates, for New York State Attorney General.

44 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-green/#blogger_bio

45 LLCs are limited liability corporations. Because one individual can set up many LLCs and funnel campaign contributions through them, they represent a loophole in New York State campaign law.

find a way to get through those loopholes. I've come full circle on this. I'm a strong supporter of campaign finance reform, but I'm now opposed to campaign finance reform that will close the opportunity for people without means, whether they are people of color, a lot of us don't have means, or someone else. I think the only way to go, quite frankly, is through Clean Elections. I think, I haven't decided yet how far I'm going to push this publicly, and this is my first statement on this, but it's sort of an epiphany for me that I may actually oppose any of these incremental changes in campaign finance reform.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Jessica's work is done.

JESSICA WISNESKI: Clean Elections all the way.

CHARLIE KING: It's easy for Elliot Spitzer, who comes from independent means, to close loopholes on the LLCs, because he's going to find the money someplace else. And that's on the Democratic side. I think that's an important point to make. If you begin to limit the amount of money that comes in, you're still going to have special interests that are controlling, it's just different special interests.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: You brought up our governor. We know that campaign finance reform, not necessarily the Clean Elections policy we're talking about, but the broader umbrella of campaign finance reform, has really been on his agenda over the last year. Senator Krueger, I wonder if you'd give us a sense of your take on what Governor Spitzer is trying to do, what he's actually proposing, and whether you agree with Charlie's epiphany.

SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER: I actually do agree with Charlie's epiphany. I've had my own frustrations with the fact that I don't believe the Spitzer administration so far has been willing to take the steps needed to get us to Clean Elections. They've talked about campaign finance reform, they've put out a bill.⁴⁶ Some of us fought privately, I guess I'm saying that publicly now, that it wasn't the right bill, and continued to make specific arguments about why trying for the half glass full model of campaign finance reform without going all the way to public financing would be a twofold problem for us. One, the point Charlie's making. For people who maybe are familiar with city campaigns versus state, the loopholes in state campaign finance system are larger than the rules themselves. Add to that, as someone earlier referenced, the question of audit. If we were to audit the state system, that could create the kind of press hysteria it ought to motivate a crisis to moves things. For a full disclosure, I served as the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee Chairperson for four years. My job was both to fund-raise for Democratic

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46 <http://www.observer.com/2007/spitzers-campaign-finance-reform-plan>

candidates trying to win back the Senate for the Democrats, but also to watch very carefully what my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, the Republicans, were doing with their fund raising. One quarter, the Republican majority campaign committee put in that they raised no money. I wrote a letter to the Board of Elections saying, “Something’s wrong, please investigate.” I got a nice letter back, eventually, saying, thank you, we will. That was the 2004 elections. It’s 2007, and they never looked into it. Again, it wasn’t an individual candidate, but the chair of one party’s committee saying, “Excuse me, the other party forgot to file their money. Somebody ought to take a look.” I also think we have to go to Clean Elections. Bundling⁴⁷ is a reality even in the city system. Who’s kidding who? It’s just you’re bundling in that two hundred fifty dollar category. I hear what my colleague here is saying about loopholes were the only way for him to compete, but loopholes are a huge

problem in the state system. The LLC loophole, I’d say, is probably one of the biggest ones for us to address. But I would start off by saying, I think Eliot Spitzer should go all the way to Clean Elections, because campaign finance as he proposed it so far, one, isn’t going to move past the legislature and, two, isn’t extreme enough to get the attention of the public.

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ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: One of the things Charlie mentioned was candidates of great wealth. We’re a little bit familiar with that here in New York City. A little bit.

⁴⁷ Bundling is the practice of rounding up many contributions of less than \$2,000 from friends and acquaintances, and is necessary since laws now bar huge corporate donations. <http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Bundling>

JESSICA WISNESKI: And the state.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: And the state. But certainly in the city. Dennis, I'm wondering if you could talk to whether a Clean Election system protects against, or considers, candidates like a Mayor Bloomberg, who can self finance at extraordinarily high amounts, and who do so with the message that they are then unaffected by special interests. Especially in the city, it's proven to be a very resonant message. Does Clean Elections address that?

DENNIS BURKE: Yes. Within certain limits. There are federal laws and decision, Supreme Court decisions. Buckley -Valeo⁴⁸ is the driving Supreme Court decision that unfortunately limits what caps you can put on people in terms of the money they spend. That's why our system is totally voluntary, to get around Buckley-Valeo. If someone comes into the Arizona system, and I think this is true also in Maine and Vermont and probably Connecticut,⁴⁹ with a lot of money, and they're privately financed, or they're just a conventional candidate with a lot of money. A Clean Elections candidate's money can be matched up to a tripling of the normal amounts. That's a lot of money. Still, if a billionaire wants to spend a half a billion dollars on buying every ad in town, our theory is, let's make sure that the Clean Elections candidate has enough money to get his or her message to everybody, often. No, we're not going to try to match the billionaire, but we're going to make sure that this person has a credible campaign, and her message gets to every voter more than once. That's all we can do, I think. We have seen it, in fact, play out against candidates who've come in with an awful lot of money and have been defeated, because a Clean Elections candidate could get their message out.

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JESSICA WISNESKI: That would be true for New York's bill as well. Of course, the scale is much different in New York. You look at how much has it cost, on average, to win a State Assembly race, a State Senate race, a gubernatorial race. Especially recently, those numbers have been quite high. I look at what they're giving as an initial allotment of public funds in Arizona. Ours would be much higher, but enough to stay competitive. Then up to four times more to stay competitive. That's the number one concern of legislators, I would think, is the wealthy candidate.

SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER: I'd throw in that if we could go to public TV access, instead of paid TV ads, that you would actually counter the power of the privately wealthy candidate. There's actually a rule in elections: there's a time when you just

⁴⁸ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/americas/2000/us_elections/glossary/a-b/649942.stm

⁴⁹ Connecticut matches up to twice the normal amounts, unless there is a smear campaign, when it matches up to three times.

really can't spend any more money. You can keep pouring money in, but it doesn't get you anywhere. It's TV that's eating up all of the money in elections. Let's face it, we've both been candidates. Have you ever seen a thirty-second ad that tells you anything about anyone, even yourself?

CHARLIE KING: Just mine. That's the only one I saw.

SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER: With the exception of Charlie's ad.

CHARLIE KING: And I was the only one who saw it, because we had such limited money, it was only on at three AM.

SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER: If we actually didn't spend the money on TV, even if Mike Bloomberg wanted to spend a hundred and fifty dollars per voter, at least he'd have to walk to each of our houses and hand us the check. Which might be interesting, as opposed to just doing it.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: When I was reading up on Arizona's experience, I found myself thinking undemocratic thoughts. Let me explain, give me a chance. It seemed that one of the key measures of success was the number of candidates in primary challenges, the number of people who are now motivated and able to launch a campaign. I started thinking to myself, "Are we better off when more people run?" Now let me finish the thought. The secondary question is, this relates to what Senator Krueger is saying, "Are we better off when more people run and when we don't know the difference between them?" Is it fair to judge the strength of our system based on how many candidates are engaged in primary challenges?

DENNIS BURKE: I know the other side of that coin, which is when people run time and time again unopposed. We had a lot of that in Arizona. We don't have any of that now. I don't know what the breaking point is. I don't know how many hundreds of people you want to run against an individual seat; probably not that many. You don't

want to see them run unopposed, and that has literally stopped in Arizona under this system.

The voters are calling for choice in the voting booth. It clearly increases competition. Still, because you have to go out there and collect hundreds of small donations from your community, you really have to prove that you're a viable candidate. The Clean Elections system does that.

—Jessica Wisneski, Citizen Action

JESSICA WISNESKI: I think one of the best parts about a Clean Election system is, because of the qualifying process, we're looking for not a ton of candidates to run in a race. The voters are calling for choice

in the voting booth. It clearly increases competition. Still, because you have to go out there and collect hundreds of small donations from your community, you really have to prove that you're a viable candidate. The Clean Elections system does that.

CHARLIE KING: I would actually look at it a different way. There is always a narrowing of whatever number of candidates you have by certain criteria. I see Anne Michaud ⁵⁰ here. A lot of the media will begin to handicap who's strong, who's not strong. Political insiders from both parties rate who's strong or not strong based on a lot of different things, one of them being money. If you take money out of the equation there'll still be that narrowing, no matter how many candidates there are. It might be based on ideas, it might be based on other criteria, but it just won't be money. For me, whether there's a hundred people running for a position, or five, there is an outside force that does create this narrowing anyway. It just depends on how you choose to narrow. If you take money out, then it's not going to be that.

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—Charlie King

SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER: For me, one of the points, I think, of all of us care about this is, “Why isn't anybody participating in the election process from the voter side”? If you have ten people running instead of two, you conceivably have ten people out there trying to convince people there's a reason they ought to care about this election cycle.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: And at least eight more people voting.

SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER: And their family and friends, that's right. I actually don't find it disturbing that you would see large numbers of candidates, and I think Charlie's right. The process whittles its way by definition. Especially if you take money out of it, you'll see in any election where a whole group of people say, “Maybe I'm going to run,” that actually, when they discover how much work is involved, you have a self-whittling anyway.

DENNIS BURKE: I would say, by the way, between elections it's not like we're handing out money. It's quite an involved process. It's kind of an IQ test right from the get go. If you can participate, you've got a lot of ways you need to comply, and things to do right. We haven't really seen people abusing the system, just in a very, very few cases. We haven't seen people lining up around the block to run. It's a difficult process, but for those who are serious candidates, and who have support in the community, it's there for them and they're using it.

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ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: My concerns have been assuaged, thank you.

50 <http://www.annemichaud.com/>

JESSICA WISNESKI: May I just ask Dennis one question? Did voter participation increase in Arizona?

DENNIS BURKE: It did, but it's difficult to tell. Because if you have a very fiery immigration issue on the ballot or a big gubernatorial race then it will fluctuate. Those fluctuations are so great from year to year, and it's only been in power since 2000, so it's hard to tell. By my reading of it, yes, it's probably up fifteen percent or so.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: One last question from me and then we'll open it up. When the Drum Major Institute sends out emails, it's not unusual for me to get angry emails back. Especially if I'm talking about Lou Dobbs or something. But when I sent out this message, and title of the event was "Getting Special Interest Money Out of State Elections," I was very surprised to see that there were a couple of colleagues in organized labor who were sending me frustrated emails with the questions, "Does Labor count? Is Labor a special interest?" I'm wondering, in particular to the two people here who are candidates, or are elected officials or were attempting to be, and Jessica, from your expertise, do you think Labor would be negatively impacted by a Clean Election system?

I think that while Labor would initially both be upset and have to change how they do business, it would actually be terrific for Labor. It would mean they would have to organize their own members to want to make contributions to individual candidates, which would, in fact, if done correctly, motivate Labor to do a better effort of organizing their own workers as to their common concerns.

—New York State Senator Liz Krueger

CHARLIE KING: When you're talking about Labor, in these battles, people are going to want to try to use money as a weapon. Of course Labor's going to be upset, because they use money as a weapon to provide benefit to their side. I think they should be hurt just like everybody else gets hurt. But again, when you talk about how you modify falling short of what Dennis is talking about, does it really change

anything? Or does it actually just narrow it down so that people really effectively can't run unless you're wealthy, or you're so wired in to whatever existing money is left that they can continue to compete?

SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER: I take a slightly different track. I think that while Labor would initially both be upset and have to change how they do business, it would actually be terrific for Labor. It would mean they would have to organize their own members to want to make contributions to individual candidates, which would, in fact, if done correctly, motivate Labor to do a better effort of organizing their own workers as to their common concerns. I actually think Labor suffers already from not being serious enough about organizing as an assignment for themselves. I also think it would force Labor to think through what has been perhaps a winning argument for some locals, but basically a majoritarian approach to anything in politics. I use myself as an example I'm a Democrat in a Republican controlled Senate, so Labor goes Republican in the Senate. People who don't follow Albany think Labor is a Democratic entity, but in Albany, Labor is with the Republicans in the Senate. When

I was running in my special election, UFT⁵¹ supported the Republican candidate against me even though he'd written an Op Ed in the *Daily News* attacking the UFT and supporting vouchers. I was thought, well, this is interesting. I sent a letter to the teachers in my district saying, just FYI, your union is supporting a guy who's opposed to you. Here are my positions against vouchers and in favor of public education. I suspect I probably got most of the teachers' votes in my district, not that most teachers can afford to live in my district. Most working people can't afford to live in my district, but the few that do live in my district. I think if Labor in that situation had to go to their members and say, "So really, where do you want us on this one, guys? The guy who's written an Op Ed piece opposing the UFT, the public school system, and supporting vouchers, or the woman who actually seems to support public education?" I suspect that under a scenario of Clean Elections having to drive the decisions that are made in Labor in order to get their members to give money, in that case they probably would have made a different decision, and I think that's healthy for the process as well.

DENNISS BURKE: A real world example of what actually happens: The labor unions were a little divided in terms of their support of the reform in Arizona, but some were strongly for it. Some were very worried that it would challenge the way they did business. Their experience with it since has been a hundred percent positive. My daughter's a labor organizer in Arizona. They love it. A union hall full of people can put somebody on a ballot now. They see it as a very positive tool for them in the legislature as well. They can get to people now who before were off limits, because they had sold their souls to interest. Now they can talk to them.

JESSICA WISNESKI: First I just want to note I agree completely that Clean Elections and other campaign finance reforms should be a package deal. If you do close any of those loopholes, you need a Clean Election system as the alternative to run in. That's absolutely key, along with things like enforcement of the Board of Elections, and resources for the board to administer the system. The reason I'm fighting for Clean Elections is because it's a return to grassroots politics. It's engaging your average, every day person who maybe votes, maybe doesn't, in the political process. I think labor unions become more powerful under this system because they have this membership that can organize in the community. You have the major donors or the corporations, and unions in New York. Take money out of that, unions become more powerful because they've got the grassroots base to organize in the community and, like Dennis said, to go and get a candidate qualified like that. They can go out there, give the qualifying contributions, and do the door knocking it takes. That's the stuff that it really does

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—Jessica Wisneski, Citizen Action

51 United Federation of Teachers: <http://www.uft.org/>

take, especially in a Clean Election system, to get elected. It's no longer about what I can put on TV or on the radio. It's about knocking on doors and talking to the volunteers one on one. A lot of Labor in New York hasn't really come out. We've had great conversations with NYSUT,⁵² the teacher's union who thinks it's a great idea.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Do we have a question from the audience?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm an attorney. I have a question on Labor and on grass roots. How in Clean Elections are in-kind contributions handled, particularly, phone banking, and get out the vote drives? That's a real contribution, but it's not a monetary one per se, unless you have the cost of the communication system, etc...

JESSICA WISNESKI: I believe in our bill, as in most Clean Election bills in Public Campaign's model,⁵³ you can do in-kind contributions up to a very small limit. A qualifying contribution would be treated just like a normal contribution once you're a qualified candidate. I think they make exceptions. If someone brings a plate of cookies to your gathering, it's not going to count. But in-kind would be just like any other donation. In our bill in New York, we've allowed a limited amount of party money. We do want a role for political parties, and that's been really important to the Assembly members we've asked. I don't think Maine or Arizona have in their laws the ability for parties to give a certain amount of money, even to Clean Elections candidates. We've put in a limited amount in this bill because it was so important to the legislators we talked to.

DENNIS BURKE: You're stretching my memory, and I'm not sure exactly how we handled it in detail. In general, it would be difficult to give a lot of in-kind support to a candidate if you could, in fact, conceivably put a monetary value on it. The unions would not be able to help there as they would a traditional candidate. That has, unfortunately, spawned some independent support campaigns that can become a problem in a Clean Election system, but that also can trigger the match. For example, if your competitor has an independent expenditure campaign that's not directly associated with your campaign but is benefiting your campaign an opposing candidate can get a match for the value of that thing. Like I said, it's not simple, but fairness rarely is. There is an attempt to try to deal with that, but the unions have not squealed about that being a problem. They're happy to just act as individuals in those campaigns.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Dan Jacoby,⁵⁴ an organizer with Democracy for New York.⁵⁵

52 <http://www.nysut.org/cps/rde/xchg/nysut/hs.xsl/index.htm>

53 <http://library.publiccampaign.org/studies/2002/12/clean-money-clean-elections-comparisons>

54 http://www.dailygotham.com/blog/dan_jacoby

55 <http://www.dfnyc.org/dfny/>

DAN JACOBY: We've been talking about the philosophy and the wonderful things, and I'd like to ask a question about the practical aspect of the results of Clean Elections. I'd like to ask Mr. Burke if he can give us examples of some bills that have been passed or budget changes that have been made because your legislature no longer has to listen to the big special interests. In other words, can you show us some real success as a result of Clean Elections?

DENNIS BURKE: Yes, I can. Let me start with the general first. Bills now coming through the legislative process are better bills, because the input is different on them now than it was. Sometimes it's hard to measure that, but, in terms of the measurables I can give you a few. For example, the Clean Elections governor put through a senior prescription discount program that is quite good. It's called a CoppeRx Card.⁵⁶ She said she never could have gotten that through if she had a traditional kind of fund raising support for her campaign. She never could have got it through the medical community and pharmaceutical community. That's a big program in Arizona. Like most western states, when Arizona was granted statehood, it was given this huge amount of federal land and has been selling it off ever since. Whenever we sell a piece of state land it helps fund the school system and that sort of stuff. It used to be rife with special interests and special deals in the sale of those lands. The annual sales were a hundred and twenty-eight million dollars a year. Now they average about three hundred million dollars a year, because all the special interests have been pulled out of that system. People know that about that system. I'm not picking something that isn't talked about a lot in Arizona. In that one area alone we make so much more money for the taxpayers than they ever spend on the Clean Election System. Marc Spitzer, when he was on the Corporation Commission, put through an alternative energy requirement for the utilities. Believe it or not, in Arizona, the Sunshine State, we had about a one percent kilowatt generation from solar and wind. They bumped that up to fifteen percent, because five out of five of the commissioners were Clean Elections candidates. They said they never, ever could have gotten it in the old regime. Again, that will have a tremendous financial and environmental impact for Arizona for years and years to come. Almost every rock you turn over, you'll find stories like that.

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—Arizona Activist Dennis Burke

SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER: Can I just add a New York story? When Dennis was talking before about how the lobbyists in Arizona seemed to go along with this or, at

⁵⁶ <http://azgovernor.gov/coppercard/>

least they didn't try to fight it. I was thinking, "Wow, it's a softer, gentler state than Albany and New York." Because I put a bottle bill in. Now, I'm a Democrat in the Senate, so in theory nobody should worry about my bills at all. They're not going anywhere under my name. But I had a lobbyist say, through an intermediary, that I had to withdraw my bill, "Or else." Or else he would not allow any of his clients to give me money ever. I did a little homework and looked up and saw all his clients are bad guys and I wouldn't take their money. They wouldn't give it to me, but I wouldn't take it anyway. I sent the message back saying, "That's okay, I don't take any money from your clients anyway. Never mind. Thank you so much." Then he sent back another message saying, "If you don't withdraw your bill, I will make sure my clients don't give to any Democratic senator." I made somebody go through the homework to add up all the money all of his clients gave to all the Democratic senators that year. It added up to twenty-five thousand dollars, which is not a lot of money in New York politics, and I was in the campaign committee business. I sent back a message saying, "I'll make it up to them, it's okay. Tell your clients to take the money." Then I run into him in person. This is why I'm telling the whole story. He looks at me and he says, "Are you even an American?" So I said, "Excuse me?" "Are you even an American?" he said again. I asked, "Last time I checked, isn't this just a paying gig for you? Aren't you taking it personally?" And he was outraged, and continued to make the effort to order me to pull my bill back. I say that for the opposite side of the nice people in Arizona, the not always nice people in New York State.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Perpetuating the stereotype here.

SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER: We're a tough crowd.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Do we have a question in front?

SUZY SANDOR: Yes, hi. I'm Suzy Sandor and I'm an Independent. I can't vote in the elections, basically. If you can't vote in the primary it really doesn't matter. Money doesn't mean anything for me. All elections are not clean. I was wondering, what about us? I mean, I don't know how it is in Arizona but let's say in Connecticut, you can register the day before. Not something I'd like to do, to register in a party. In North Carolina, if you're Independent you can choose your primary, which is still Democrats or Republican. So what about us? We pay for matching funds, we pay for the primaries. Maybe we could get a tax credit, since we don't use it? Since we're talking about money, and that only money moves anything.

I'll give you the driving directions to Arizona, because about twenty percent of voters are Independents. Independents can vote in their choice of either of the primaries for the major parties, and Independents are participating in the Clean Elections program to a tremendous number. In fact, we like Independents, because we don't have the primary cost in Clean Elections.

—Arizona Activist Dennis Burke

DENNIS BURKE: If you'll come to me afterwards I'll give you the driving directions to Arizona, because about twenty percent of voters are Independents. Independents can vote in their choice of either of the primaries for the major

parties, and Independents are participating in the Clean Elections program to a tremendous number. In fact, we like Independents, because we don't have the primary cost in Clean Elections.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Jessica?

JESSICA WISNESKI: The same would be true for our Clean Elections. This would really open it up for other parties, and Independent candidates not enrolled in a party. You could run for office and use the system, because we're so party dependent in New York. It really would make a difference for those really motivated Independents to do it.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: More Independent candidates could run, but that doesn't necessarily mean that you would diminish the impact of party elections in determining who would successfully run.

JESSICA WISNESKI: I think that's true.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Okay. Which is probably a bigger statement about our parties than Clean Elections.

JESSICA WISNESKI: It's really about opportunity.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: There are a lot of questions. I'm going to defer to the Commissioner,⁵⁷ in the back.

COMMISSIONER HENRY STERN: First, I want to just comment that the flow of money is like the flow of water downhill. It's very hard to cut it off, because you plug one leak and there's another. That's the nature of money. In New York we have a matching fund, but a lot of it is wasted on sure winners and sure losers, because in New York City at least, ninety percent of the elections are pre-determined. There is no race, in fact, because of the nature of the districts and who lives there. The winners are spending money to get more publicity for themselves, and the losers are running to become known, perhaps for their private law practices. That's a waste. And what that leads to is that, I think an even more important issue than money, is districting. Districting turns those races into runaways, and when there is no competition, there is no real reason for people to take the trouble to come out to vote. If there is any competition, it's in the primaries. In the primaries, a lot of people are excluded, so I think they have problems. As far as labor unions, they're the largest contributors. They're the largest single special interest. What's more, basically the election is about who's going to get the biggest share of the state budget. If eighty percent of the city budget goes to personnel costs, and Labor has a direct interest in both personnel and pensions, aren't they the overwhelming private interest in all these elections?

57 Henry Stern is a former New York City Parks Commissioner and City Council member.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Set's take the first one. Senator Krueger looks like she wants to answer it. Is all of this moot if we don't address a districting question that protects incumbency?

SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER: I appreciate the point, because I had it in my notes earlier today to say it and there just wasn't a place. You can't just do campaign finance. You can't just do Clean Elections, you have to do a series of things. I agree with you that you have to go to a non-partisan, fair re-districting process. Now, ironically for New York City, that would be a relatively irrelevant exercise. It's a Democratic city. So we could have a completely pure independent re-districting process for state electeds in New York City, and you'd probably lose two of the four Senate Republican seats. Brian Kavanagh's in the back. How many Republican Assembly members do we have in New York City? See, you don't even know. A couple.

JESSICA WISNESKI: A handful?

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Whoever they were, we invited them today.

If you had independent re-districting, you'd also see a shift in upstate versus downstate participation in the legislature, since, in the last 2002 re-districting, the Senate Republicans... made the upstate districts have fewer voters in them than the New York City districts, so they could get another seat upstate; a little trick of the trade. They also, and particularly in Nassau County, took what should have been geographically a Senate seat that would have been majority-minority and broke the black and Latino voters into four separate State Senate districts.

—New York State Senator Liz Krueger

SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER: But in the rest of the state I do believe that you would see a shift, not just on the question of party. If you had independent re-districting, you'd also see a shift in upstate versus downstate participation in the legislature, since, in the last 2002 re-districting, the Senate Republicans created a brand new Senate seat. We went from sixty-one to sixty-two overnight without ever discussing it with the public to add an extra seat upstate. We also made the upstate districts have fewer voters in them than the New York City districts, so they could get another seat

upstate; a little trick of the trade. They also, and particularly in Nassau County, took what should have been geographically a Senate seat that would have been majority-minority and broke the black and Latino voters into four separate State Senate districts. This insured that they could not have any opportunity to perhaps choose to, or not choose to, elect a Senate member who was African American or Latino. On theory of the Republican majority, that would probably be a Democrat as opposed to a Republican. I do think it is critical that the State get its arms around having an independent non-partisan process for re-districting, along with Clean Elections. On your point about people using the campaign finance model, at least in the city, for themselves. Again, I think the majority of this discussion has been around a Clean Election public finance system as opposed to a matching fund system. I think, in a public funding system, it is less likely that somebody who's not really serious about this would pull it off. I don't know that you ever completely

get around the incumbent advantage. I mean, I have an advantage by definition of being the incumbent. I get newsletters that go out. They get censored by the Republicans, that's another story, but I get them. I am more likely to get quoted in the press. I am more likely to be perceived of as an expert, even though I may or may not know anything about the topic compared to someone who's not in elected office. There are certain advantages to incumbency that I'm not sure any system is ever going to fix. I think the goals are, in both redistricting and Clean Elections, to more even the playing field.

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—New York State Senator Liz Krueger

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Our next event will be on suppression of the ego of potential candidates on Marketplace. I'm kidding. I just want to ask a very quick question, and I wanted to ask this of Charlie. You know, when we do these events, and we do different topics because we're more interested in successful models of progressive policy, it's always an interesting challenge to build audience for the event. I'm wondering, because we certainly had an interesting experience, do you think, now that you are running a leading civil rights organization, that the civil rights community is engaged around the issue of campaign finance reform?

CHARLIE KING: Not at all. It isn't. I think that's for a lot of reasons. Number one is that, for better or for worse, there are just a lot of issues that seem to be more pressing. Just by way of example, I'm leaving tomorrow to go down to Jena, Louisiana because there were six African American high school students who got involved in a schoolyard fight down there with white students, after three nooses

[The civil rights community is] not at all [engaged around campaign finance reform.] Number one is that, for better or for worse, there are just a lot of issues that seem to be more pressing. I've said this to a lot of African American and Latino elected officials. We're completely divorced from this whole money-grab issue.

—Charlie King

were hanging from trees, just making the short version. The African-American students were initially facing attempted murder charges up to twenty-two years, and no one was injured. It's not that it necessarily pales in comparison, but when you're talking about visceral issues, that's number one. Number two is, Andrea told me to be controversial, so I'm going to just throw it out there. I've said this to a lot of

African American and Latino elected officials. We're completely divorced from this whole money-grab issue. If you did research on who gives money where, elected officials of color don't get it. They don't understand fully what that means in terms of their ability to run for higher office, and all of that. When we're talking about closing LLC loopholes, again, I'm just using that as an example, it's something that

just doesn't resonate, because there's not a whole heck of a lot of LLC money that's going to elected officials of color to begin with. It's all sort of alien, in a way, to their experience, or to my experience, when I was running for office.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: We have time for a couple more, but keep them fast, the questions and answers.

ALLISON TUPPER: Hello. I'm Allison Tupper, and I work with CANY⁵⁸ on this issue. I had the opportunity not long ago to speak briefly and privately with one of our New York City Labor leaders, and I mentioned this issue, as I do almost every day. He was really pretty clearly against it. It was important to him that the Labor have their lobbying and be able to buy some time with the electeds. What I'm wondering then is, what do we do to bring them around? Do we try to educate the laborers? Do we try to educate the laborers or the Labor leaders? It's quite clear from what several of you have said that it would be much to the advantage of the unions to have clean money, but they don't know it. So what do we do about that?

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Let's just do this quickly.

I haven't talked to a lot of the Labor leaders, but I've certainly talked to a lot of the Labor members. Like everything, the people get this immediately. I speak in front of local Labor groups all the time who get this, support it instantly, and send resolutions up. I do think this will be an effort in New York that is all about grass roots.

—Jessica Wisneski, Citizen Action

JESSICA WISNESKI: Sure. Really quick. It's funny, I haven't talked to a lot of the Labor leaders, but I've certainly talked to a lot of the Labor members. Like everything, the people get this immediately. I speak in front of local Labor groups all the time who get this, support it instantly, and send resolutions up. I do think this will be an effort in New York that is all about grass roots. It's all about people really engaging,

getting out there, talking about this constantly, and moving, really pushing, on the leadership of the legislature, of the Labor unions, of everybody who plays a role in politics. It's going to take a tremendous organizing effort. I do think not all Labor is against Clean Elections. There's plenty for it. CWA⁵⁹ has been for it. UAW⁶⁰ is for it. NYSUT has come out for it. There is supportive Labor, and we need to work on that and make that part of the conversation. I have a question, though, to ask. In other places in the country, you know, I think of Reverend Carrie Bolton,⁶¹ a civil rights leader in North Carolina, who has made this a major issue for her personally. I wonder if you see this as a civil rights issue, as a follow up to not just getting the vote but also being able to run for office, and communities having access to enough money to run?

CHARLIE KING: Honestly, the answer is I do see it as a civil rights issue. I've now

58 <http://www.citizenactionny.org/cmce/cmceindex.html>

59 Communications Workers of America: <http://www.cwa-union.org/>

60 United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America: <http://www.uaw.org/>

61 <http://www.neaction.org/CivilRightsCleanElectionReport2005.pdf>

come to the position, and now I guess I'm concretizing it right here, that it's got to be an all or nothing thing, quite frankly. If you do this piecemeal stuff, as the Commissioner said before, money is like water flowing downhill. You know, we in the communities of color are not going to get what's remaining. It's got to be all, or it's got to be nothing, because if it's halfway, then we're going to lose. We being communities of color. It really is that simple.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: So there is a no trickle-down democracy.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I just want to ask a simple question: how about the press? What sort of effects do you see the press has now on elections, and how it would change with this?

CHARLIE KING: I'm going to answer that question. The press plays an incredible role in shaping the opinions. I mean, one of my favorite quotes actually was the quote of the day for the *New York Times*. When I was running for lieutenant governor and was reelected a private citizen then, The *New York Times* asked me a question about something and I said, "Look, I stood on the street running naked down the street with my hair on fire and you didn't cover that either." The basic bottom line, when you talk about that winnowing down process, the press will winnow down campaigns so that all of you can get their sense of what the flow is. Right now, it's all about money. If you talk about any elected official, anyone who's running for office, we're all driven by campaign finance deadlines, war chests, who's got the money and who doesn't. That is shorthand for the press to determine how strong you are. That's the way it is. The press will continue to do their winnowing, but hopefully, if you have Clean Elections, it's going to be based on something else, like how much support you have or whatever it is. As long as it's just not the money aspect.

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—Charlie King

SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER: Press certainly plays a big role, although it also really matters whether you're running statewide. Charlie's always been brave enough to get out there and run for statewide offices. Where, if you're running at a local level, it can be a very different story. Press also plays a role, but we forget sometimes we live in this sort of ghetto of Manhattan, in New York City, where our press is really the national world press. It plays a different role in elections at the local level, or even at a State Senate level around the state, than it does in a statewide election where you're either under the scrutiny of someone running for president, or you're considered superfluous because you didn't end up with the biggest filing that week.

CHALRIE KING: One really quick story from my campaign, which was one of our fatal decisions why we lost. We pushed for a huge filing in January of 2006 where we raised over \$1.1 million dollars in six months, more than anyone except for Andrew. Our theory was that the press would pick that up and say we've got this great momentum. Unfortunately, the press didn't pick this up at all. As a result, our whole strategy for six months was to get press attention based on how much money we raised for six months. After that happened, in retrospect, we realized there was no way that we could compete with Andrew in the race for attorney general. It was a money thing. It wasn't an idea thing, it wasn't how many endorsements we had. It was money.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Of course, what I think is implied in the question, as well, is not just how the press can make or break political fortunes, but the role that the press does or does not play in informing its readers to be able to make the decisions that they would have to make under a system requiring more information and more deliberation. We have time for one more question.

CHRISTINE SUMMER: Hi, my name is Christine Summer, and my question is somewhat related to what the Commissioner had said. I would appreciate comments or clarification from the illustrious panel, concerning this phrase "viable candidate." It's clear that "viable candidate" means someone who has genuine potential to win. However, I just want to quickly explain why I'm asking this question, because I do

think it's very money related. About ten years ago, I belonged to an Upper West Side Democratic club, and a very wise political veteran said that he remembered a time when an individual decided to run for office he or she was asked, "What are your ideas on the relevant issues to the voters? What base of support are you going to be able to generate?" Those were the top concerns. And of course now, the concern and the question is, how much money can you raise?

A very wise political veteran said that he remembered a time when an individual decided to run for office he or she was asked, "What are your ideas on the relevant issues to the voters? What base of support are you going to be able to generate?" Those were the top concerns. And of course now, the concern and the question is, how much money can you raise?

—Audience member Christine Summer

the concern and the question is, how much money can you raise? Who is it exactly who decides who is a viable candidate? Who tells us who the viable candidates are? It really appears to me that it's quite money related.

JESSICA WISNESKI: It certainly is not in a Clean Election system. In a Clean Election system, the voters in the district are the people who say who's a viable candidate. They're the ones who have to give the qualifying contributions in order for a candidate to get the public dollars to run. If I want to run for State Assembly where I live, up in Ulster County, I'm going to have to get out on the doors, and go have a spaghetti supper. That's how we do it up there in the country. I would have to go out there and ask for five to a hundred dollar contributions from registered voters in my district, regardless of party. If I can collect under our draft legislation four hundred of them, then I can receive public funds for the primary. Under a

Clean Election System, it is the public who decides who's a viable candidate. Now, Clean Elections is voluntary. I don't know if we've made that crystal clear. You don't have to use Clean Elections if the program exists. It's an option. Of course, if I'm running a Clean Elections campaign and my opponent is doing traditional fund raising and they spend more than me, I would get additional funds to stay competitive, up to that limit.

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—Jessica Wisneski, Citizen Action

DENNIS BURKE: In Arizona, viability obviously isn't about how much money you can raise. I don't really even think it's about winning. I think a viable candidate is somebody who has an important message. A lot of times, somebody will run to put pressure on the incumbent, if the incumbent was not supporting the community in some way the people thought was important. Somebody's going to run against them and hold their feet to the fire in the debates. We do have mandatory debates for participating candidates. That's been very good for the press, to answer an earlier question. They like that. It also frees people up to speak their mind. The legislature has turned into real flesh and blood people who have interesting things to say, instead of the cardboard cutouts that were there for years and years. Viability, really is about participation. I forget who first wrote, "Democracy is not something that we have, it's something that we do." It's not about winning. It's about participation. It's just fine to lose. It's just fine to build your name recognition. It's just fine to move yourself up as a leader of the community over lots of failed elections. They're not failed elections, they're part of this dialogue. Get rid of this idea that it's just about the Super Bowl ring of winning. It's not. It's about participation.

"Democracy is not something that we have, it's something that we do." It's not about winning. It's about participation. It's just fine to lose. It's just fine to build your name recognition. It's just fine to move yourself up as a leader of the community over lots of failed elections. They're not failed elections, they're part of this dialogue.

—Arizona Activist Dennis Burke

JESSICA WISNESKI: And competition.

SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER: I would agree, yes, we all know that money plays too important a role in too many elections. It's not the only thing. Viability, I'd argue, for

anyone who's thinking about running is your own opinion about whether you have something to say, and whether you think you can make government better. When I decided to run in 2000, I was actually drafted, to some degree against my will, although I realized very quickly it was the right thing for me to do. I faced a primary. I faced not having come out of the Democratic club system. People didn't know me. They didn't understand why I would run in a primary to lose against the incumbent Republican. Because that was the assumption anyway, that the Republican had been there for thirty-two years and wasn't going anywhere, thank you. It was basically

my decision to make the argument to the people in my district that I should be taken seriously as a candidate. I stood outside on street corners for five or six hours a day talking to anyone I could get near. I did what Charlie did also, I spent then the other fifty percent of my life raising money.

I hate fund raising. I hate that I have spent sometimes up to fifty percent of my time raising money in order to keep my seat. I actually think I'm supposed to spend my time thinking through better public policy for the State of New York, and working to get us better laws. I frankly do resent that, as a candidate for elected office in the State of New York the assumption is, in order for you to get a seat, help others get a seat or hold your seat, that you have to spend a huge percentage of your life begging strangers for money.

—New York State Senator Liz Krueger

I guess going just finalizing back to Clean Elections, another reason why people should want Clean Elections, people who do this for a living. I don't know about Charlie, but I hate fund raising. I hate that I have spent sometimes up to fifty percent of my time raising money in order to keep my seat. I actually think I'm supposed to spend my time thinking through better public policy for the State of New York, and working to get us better laws. I frankly do resent that, as a candidate for elected office in the State of New York, the assumption

is, in order for you to get a seat, help others get a seat or hold your seat, that you have to spend a huge percentage of your life begging strangers for money. I think there's a really good reason why lots of people choose not to go into this career at this point. They are wiser than Charlie and I, and they say, why would we do this?

CHARLIE KING: I would say that Clean Elections are good for candidates. It's not just begging strangers for money, but you've become a pariah in your own family. I couldn't get my mom on the phone for months, because she thought I was trying to hit her up for another fifty bucks. I said, "Ma, look, rent can come later. I'm in this tough race." That's part of it. Viability, though, I sort of come at from a more cynical point of view. The system, the process, will ultimately come up with a series of illogical reasons for how and why you're viable that aren't issues-related. It's going to be, "I've got a base here, I'm endorsed by this, I'm endorsed by that." which is fine. I think, though, getting money out is critical. At least when you're running statewide, it's all about money. The reason I was going to win for attorney general was that I was the alternative to Andrew, because I raised more money than anyone else. I raised more money than Mark Green was my argument. When it came to issue development, truthfully we didn't really start to focus on real issues in my race until we were about a month out before editorial board meetings and debates. We were spending all of our time racing to grab cash. I think viability will ultimately be determined by an illogical set of ideas, but you shouldn't have money as part of it.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: We are out of time, and, the Drum Major Institute not being a special interest, we actually have to vacate the premises. I just want to ask the panelists to close, maybe twenty seconds: What would New York need to do so that one day, when a Drum Major Institute in some state is saying, "We need a model, let's have New York come and talk to us about what they've

done,” what would New York need to do to be that model?

JESSICA WISNESKI: Dennis said he had a few things that were necessary. One of those is scandal. I don’t know if New York needs any more scandal. I think we’re at our height with that. We’ve got the research. Common Cause,⁶² Citizen Action and the League⁶³ have done great research on all of the horrible things you need to know about the current campaign finance system. I think we need legislative leadership. Legislators who are passionate about this and care about this to tell the governor we want to do it, we want to go all the way, and we want to do it now. The Assembly can certainly start leading us there this session, with the Senate to follow the next session. We need a tremendous grassroots campaign, that Citizen Action of New York City is leading the way and building every day. In my last five seconds, no special interest contributors are knocking on our door. It takes a tremendous amount of resources to fund a campaign to pass a Clean Elections law in New York State. Anyone out there who wants to make a donation to the effort, feel free to see myself or Pam Bennet, our director, who’s sitting up front here. Thank you all for your interest.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Charlie?

CHARLIE KING: First of all, now that I’m in the private sector, any special interest money you want to send my way, I’m happy to take it. Second, to me it’s an all or nothing proposition. When you start looking at the Band-Aid approach or the intermediate approach, you must ask yourself, “Who is it ultimately benefiting? Is it really just sort of a press statement?” If you hear elected officials saying this is a step in the right direction, really analyze it and say, “Is it really?” Because I’m willing to bet you that when you actually drill down and see what it is doing or not, going back to the Commissioner, you put your finger in one place it’s going to sprout out someplace else. Some people can just say, “We have a victory, and let’s go home.” I think we’ve got to have an all or nothing kind of concept and not pat ourselves on the back if we get incremental change. Because that’s going to be no change at all.

SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER: I think we’ve said it here today. Citizen Action has been doing an amazing job with the other good government groups. Yes, we have plenty of scandal. I think we need to bring it home to people. For me, and it was just already said, we need to make sure Joe Bruno is not the leader of the New York State Senate. He’s not going to pass Clean Elections or pretty much any other campaign finance bill that would be serious. We have two more seats to take for the Democrats to be the majority in the New York State Senate. If we tie, we’re in the majority. 2008 is a critical year, from my perspective, to change the New York State Senate, which then change where we go on many, many levels. In my last five seconds, I will tell you a story. I fight pro-gun laws. One day, I was out of my seat when Dale Volker,⁶⁴

62 <http://www.commoncause.org/att/cf/%7BFB3C17E2-CDD1-4DF6-92BE-BD4429893665%7D/BREAKING%20FREE%20FOR%20FAIR%20ELECTIONS.PDF>

63 <http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=3714>

64 <http://www.senatorvolker.com/>

the leader in the NRA movement in New York State, was bringing another bill to the floor. His council comes chasing me outside: “You have to come in and debate Dale.” I say, “No, I don’t.” “Yes, you do.” “Well, he’s going to win anyway. They always win.” “No, no, no, he wants to do an NRA letter for fund raising saying, ‘under attack by Manhattan elitist anti-gun effort.’ You have to come in and debate so we can get a good quote to go in Dale’s fundraiser letter to the NRA.” I said, “No, I’m not debating Dale so he can raise money from the NRA. This is absurd.” That, really, is part of the punch line about what’s wrong with this picture, and why we need Clean Elections.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Dennis.

DENNIS BURKE: I’ll leave you with a new idea, because this is the next step, I think, for Arizona. I would love for you to beat us to the punch. If you’re a car dealer, for example, and you’re serving in the Senate, and there’s a bill coming through that really just benefits car dealers, you’ve got to not vote on that. You have a conflict of interest. However, if there’s a bill coming along that really affects your ability to get reelected, or the amount of money that you’re going to get from campaign donors, for some reason that’s not considered a conflict of interest. I think we need to look at the conflict of interest laws, and expand them, to move over that line finally. Major contributions can become the conflict of interest that makes you recuse yourself from the vote. That’s pretty radical, but I think it would make people come running and screaming, “Please, can we have a Clean Election system?” We have been doing some research on that

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—Arizona Activist Dennis Burke

in Arizona. If you need something to put a fire under the House and the Senate, and even the city, for change, take a very strong look at your conflict of interest law and see how it might be tweaked.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Thank you. Thanks to this fantastic panel, and to Dennis Burke for sharing. Thank you all for coming. The event will be available in case you want to relive it. Transcript and video will be on our site. We've got fantastic events coming up: the Attorney General from Minnesota on preventing predatory lending, the Dallas District Attorney on exonerating the innocent, and the Mayor of Boston will be here in December to talk about converting abandoned buildings into affordable housing. Thank you everyone for coming.

End

WHO IS THE DRUM MAJOR INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY?

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The Drum Major Institute for Public Policy is a non-partisan, non-profit think tank generating the ideas that fuel the progressive movement. From releasing nationally recognized studies of our increasingly fragile middle class to showcasing progressive policies that have worked to advance social and economic justice, DMI has been on the leading edge of the public policy debate. DMI is also noted for developing new and creative ways to bring its work to the advocates and opinion leaders that need it, from starting one of the first public policy weblogs to pioneering the use of Google Adwords to hold elected officials accountable for their votes on issues of importance to their constituents. For more information, please visit www.drummajorinstitute.org

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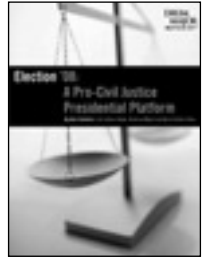
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December 2007 / It's hard to turn a big ship. Many of the worst shocks of 2007 were the continued fallout of years of wrong-headed right-wing policy to deregulate, starve the public sector, and privatize at every opportunity. But the minimum wage hike, increased aid to students, and green initiatives at the state and local level provided new hope. DMI 2007 Year In Review explores the year's best and worst public policy, looks at six snapshots of the nation and provides a recommended reading list for progressives. Also included: a hawk's eye view of what the think tanks on the conservative right are up to, and, as always, the 2007 Injustice Index.



LESSONS FROM THE MARKETPLACE: FOUR PROVEN PROGRESSIVE POLICIES FROM DMI'S MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS

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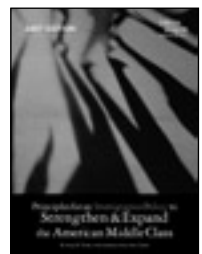
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April 2007 / It's harder for New Yorkers to enter the middle class today than ten years ago, according to DMI's groundbreaking survey of 101 top leaders from New York City's academic, business, political, policy advocacy and civic-institutional sectors. The survey analyzed top challenges for the city's current and aspiring middle class and evaluated city, state and federal policies to address New York's middle-class squeeze.



PRINCIPLES FOR AN IMMIGRATION POLICY TO STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND THE AMERICAN MIDDLE CLASS: 2007 EDITION

March 2007/ This report finds that immigrants contribute to middle-class prosperity as workers, taxpayers, and consumers, while also concluding that undocumented immigrants' lack of workplace rights undercuts the middle class. DMI's complete immigration toolkit includes an update of our 2005 report, talking points, a discussion guide, legislative analyses, and Spanish translation.



Marketplace of Ideas

In the Marketplace of Ideas, we don't just talk about problems, we highlight policies to address them and the policymakers that made them work.

"The Drum Major Institute's recent forum on increasing accountability and developing better uses for economic development subsidies with Minnesota State Senator John Hottinger was both informative and enlightening. I found it so useful to hear about the ideas of both colleagues in government and well-informed advocates about effective legislation in other states, particularly Minnesota's progressive and far reaching bill."

—NEW YORK STATE SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER



IDEAS WE BROUGHT TO MARKET:



Strengthening the Labor Movement



Tackling Environmental Injustice



Holding Corporations Accountable for Their Fair Share of Employee Health Costs



Reducing Recidivism Through Restorative Justice



Leveraging Government to Protect People from Corporate Malfeasance



Lowering the Cost of Insurance



Increasing Accountability for Economic Development Subsidies



Promoting Access to Pre-School Education



Combatting Global Warming Through Congestion Pricing



Making Prescription Drugs More Affordable

Making Health Care Universal

Confronting the Need for Massive School Construction

Preventing Predatory Mortgage Lending

Getting Special Interest Money out of State Elections

Preventing Wrongful Convictions and Exonerating the Innocent

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The Drum Major Institute for Public Policy is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to challenging the tired orthodoxies of both the right and the left. Founded during the civil rights movement, we are a progressive policy institute giving the think tanks of the conservative right a run for their money. For more information, please visit www.drummajorinstitute.org.