



## **Reinvent Albany Supports 3 Bills Before City Council Strengthening Campaign Finance Laws**

### **Bills Will:**

- 1) Restrict Felons from Receiving Public Matching Funds**
- 2) Ease Qualifying Thresholds for Candidates**
- 3) Extend Doing Business Contribution Limits**

[Reinvent Albany backed three bills heard by the New York City Council Governmental Operations committee today](#) further strengthening the city's campaign finance laws.

[Int. 747](#) (Cabrera) will prevent candidates convicted of felonies for violating the public trust from receiving public funds. Former Councilmember and State Senator Hiram Monserrate received \$87,000 in public funds in 2017 after being convicted for stealing money to fund his state senate campaign and slashing his girlfriend with a broken glass. Reinvent Albany supports this legislation, and believes candidates convicted of felony crimes involving the public trust should be barred from receiving public funds. We support candidates having the right to run for office after paying their debt to society, but do not believe taxpayers should subsidize a candidate's effort to win back the public trust.

[Int. 774](#) (Powers) will enable candidates to raise contributions as low as \$5 and have them count towards the qualifying thresholds for receiving public funds. For example, a City Council candidate must raise 75 contributions and \$5,000. The \$5,000 consists of the matchable portion of any contribution from \$10 to \$175. This bill lowers the matchable portion of any contribution to \$5. Reinvent Albany supports this legislation because candidates often seek to raise contributions as low as \$3, as fundraising research shows these low-dollar amounts are attractive in inviting people to become donors, who later may contribute more money to the candidate.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Micah Sifry, "How Low Can You Go? Why the \$3 E-mail Ask is Working," Available at: Personal Democracy Media. Available at:

<http://techpresident.com/news/21787/how-low-can-you-go-why-3-e-mail-ask-working>

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[Int. 773](#) (Powers) strengthens contribution limits on individuals “doing business” with the city by starting doing business restrictions when land use and zoning applications are submitted to the Department of City Planning. People submitting applications to DCP are not currently subject to lower campaign contributions until their applications are certified by DCP. Certification does not occur until months or even years after applications are submitted, during which time campaign contributions may be made and critical conversations occur regarding environmental impact statements. Reinvent Albany believes this period should be considered “doing business” because campaign contributions could influence or be perceived to influence application certification.