



City Council Raises Most of Campaign Cash from Larger Donations

91 percent of contributions to Councilmembers are larger than \$175

Groups call on Speaker Mark-Viverito to allow vote on Int. No. 1130-A to better incentivize raising small donations

A joint analysis by Represent.us NY and Reinvent Albany reveals that City Councilmembers collectively raised 91 percent of their campaign funds from contributions over \$175. Councilmembers rely on larger donations to fund campaigns even while the [city's voluntary public matching funds program](#) enables Councilmembers to receive \$6 in matching public funds for every \$1 raised up to \$175.

Forty-five Councilmembers actively fundraising in the 2017 election cycle raised a total of \$10.1 million for office, \$12.2 including public matching funds. Only \$907,086 was raised in contributions of \$175 or less while \$9.24 million was raised in contributions larger than \$175. \$2,054,440 was given in public matching funds. The first \$175 of all contributions is matched regardless of how large or small a contribution is.

Even when considering higher contribution thresholds of \$500 and \$1,000, Councilmembers still raised 72 percent and 59 percent of their money from contributions above those amounts, revealing the Councilmembers' reliance on larger contributions to fund their campaigns.

[Represent.us NY and Reinvent Albany, along with numerous other local and national organizations, support passage of Int. No. 1130-A.](#) The bill would make it easier for candidates to raise more money from small donors. It would enable candidates to voluntarily raise all their funds from small donations matched at a rate of \$6 in public funds for every \$1 raised, and receive as much as 85 percent of their total funds in public dollars, an increase from the current 55 percent.

The bill has 30 co-sponsors in the Council, but Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito has yet to put the legislation on the floor for a vote. The groups call on her to do so.

Under the current system, candidates may receive up to 55 percent of the spending limit for their office from public funding after meeting certain fundraising thresholds. For City Council candidates to qualify for the public matching program, they must raise at least 75 small donations (up to \$175) from contributors within their district. Candidates who chose to forgo the public matching system are not subject to spending limits but must abide by contribution limits for the office they seek.

“The city’s campaign finance system is a model for the country because most Councilmembers receive more than half their donations from small donors,” said Alex Camarda, Senior Policy Advisor for Reinvent Albany. “Yet most of the money Councilmembers raise is from larger contributions above the \$175 eligible for a public match. We therefore need to change the system to better incentivize raising more money from small donors.”

“Even for those who follow New York City campaign finance, the amount of larger donations raised is surprising,” said Tom Speaker, a leadership team member of Represent.us’s volunteer New York chapter. “The city has one of the most progressive systems in the country, but it is exceedingly difficult to win office without seeking help from donors with deeper pockets. Increasing the amount of public funding for elections would reduce candidates’ dependency on wealthy donors and empower the ordinary New Yorkers who comprise most of the city’s electorate.”

The analysis also found:

- Only 4 of 45 Councilmembers actively fundraising this cycle raised more than 25 percent of their money from small donors.
- Thirty four of 45 Councilmembers raised less than 20 percent of their funds from small donors (\$175 or less).
- Twenty seven Councilmember participating in the public matching system together raised 15 percent of their funds from small donations, while 18 non-participant Councilmembers raised 5.8 percent of their funds from small donations.

Councilmembers ranked by funds raised from small donations as a proportion of all funds

	Participant / Non-participant	Rank (greatest percentage of small donations in dollars)	Sum of small donations in dollars (without match)	Sum of large donations in dollars (without match)	Sum of all donations (without match)	Matching funds received	Percentage of total sum of donations were 175 or under
Menchaca, Carlos	P	1	\$40,656	\$66,471	\$107,127	\$124,350	38.0%
Barron, Inez	P	2	\$10,615	\$27,555	\$38,170	\$61,290	27.8%
Dromm, Daniel	NP	3	\$24,711	\$68,208	\$92,919	\$0	26.6%
Borelli, Joseph C	P	4	\$13,681	\$38,200	\$51,881	\$100,100	26.4%
Ulrich, Eric	P	5	\$31,211	\$97,420	\$128,631	\$98,500	24.3%
Maisel, Alan	P	6	\$17,765	\$60,310	\$78,075	\$25,025	22.8%
Perkins, Bill	P	7	\$10,006	\$35,200	\$45,206	\$61,656	22.1%
Rose, Deborah	P	8	\$29,065	\$104,055	\$133,120	\$188,462	21.8%
Matteo, Steven	P	9	\$17,324	\$66,475	\$83,799	\$0	20.7%
Cumbo, Laurie	P	10	\$25,579	\$98,930	\$124,508	\$158,133	20.5%
Miller, I. Daneek	P	11	\$21,996	\$87,237	\$109,233	\$116,408	20.1%
Reynoso, Antonio	P	12	\$24,527	\$101,267	\$125,795	\$96,133	19.5%
Rosenthal, Helen	P	13	\$29,852	\$128,288	\$158,140	\$123,874	18.9%
Chin, Margaret	P	14	\$31,590	\$142,154	\$173,744	\$200,200	18.2%
Levin, Stephen	P	15	\$4,486	\$20,950	\$25,436	\$0	17.6%
Eugene, Mathieu	P	16	\$17,316	\$87,125	\$104,441	\$100,100	16.6%
Espinal, Jr. Rafael L	NP	17	\$16,640	\$91,650	\$108,290	\$0	15.4%
Cabrera, Fernando	P	18	\$17,292	\$101,479	\$118,771	\$34,820	14.6%
Richards, Donovan	P	19	\$23,943	\$147,655	\$171,598	\$0	14.0%
Cohen, Andrew	NP	20	\$5,325	\$34,350	\$39,675	\$0	13.4%
King, Andrew	NP	21	\$17,886	\$127,300	\$145,186	\$0	12.3%
Treyger, Mark	P	22	\$12,861	\$99,796	\$112,657	\$99,850	11.4%
Gibson, Vanessa	P	23	\$7,961	\$62,375	\$70,336	\$0	11.3%
Koslowitz, Karen	P	24	\$12,944	\$102,581	\$115,525	\$0	11.2%

Williams, Jumaane D	NP	25	\$24,452	\$202,332	\$226,784	\$0	10.8%
Kallos, Ben	P	26	\$20,654	\$179,950	\$200,604	\$125,125	10.3%
Grodenschik, Barry	NP	27	\$12,810	\$111,890	\$124,700	\$0	10.3%
Lander, Brad	NP	28	\$41,416	\$364,929	\$406,345	\$0	10.2%
Constantinides, Costa	P	29	\$21,887	\$195,390	\$217,277	\$19,332	10.1%
Vallone, Paul	P	30	\$17,005	\$154,925	\$171,930	\$197,132	9.9%
Deutsch, Chaim	P	31	\$11,313	\$107,395	\$118,708	\$123,950	9.5%
Van Bramer, James G	NP	32	\$45,554	\$477,344	\$522,898	\$0	8.7%
Torres, Ritchie	P	33	\$22,069	\$242,750	\$264,819	\$0	8.3%
Rodriguez, Ydanis	P	34	\$21,152	\$234,271	\$255,423	\$0	8.3%
Levine, Mark	NP	35	\$34,394	\$404,716	\$439,110	\$0	7.8%
Crowley, Elizabeth	NP	36	\$39,125	\$484,517	\$523,642	\$0	7.5%
Johnson, Corey	NP	37	\$34,888	\$470,930	\$505,818	\$0	6.9%
Lancman, Rory	NP	38	\$28,935	\$398,989	\$427,924	\$0	6.8%
Ferreras-Copeland, Julissa	NP	39	\$20,030	\$338,005	\$358,035	\$0	5.6%
Cornegy, Jr., Robert	P	40	\$7,275	\$177,455	\$184,730	\$0	3.9%
Salamanca, Jr., Rafael	NP	41	\$7,610	\$224,045	\$231,655	\$0	3.3%
Mark-Viverito, Melissa	NP	42	\$20,532	\$928,097	\$948,629	\$0	2.2%
Garodnick, Daniel	NP	43	\$4,595	\$348,495	\$353,090	\$0	1.3%
Koo, Peter	NP	44	\$3,886	\$333,350	\$337,236	\$0	1.2%
Greenfield, David	NP	45	\$2,272	\$859,705	\$861,977	\$0	0.3%
		TOTAL	\$907,086	\$9,236,511	\$10,143,597	\$2,054,440	8.9%
		Participant	\$522,025	\$2,967,659	\$3,489,684	\$2,054,440	15.0%
		Non-Participant	\$385,061	\$6,268,853	\$6,653,914	\$0	5.8%

Six Councilmembers did not have active 2017 campaigns.

Not all candidates who were participants in the public matching funds program received matching funds.

Some Councilmembers, like Melissa Mark-Viverito and Dan Garodnick, raised funds for offices other than Council which have higher contribution limits than the Council.

Even while most Councilmembers' campaign money comes from larger donors, many Councilmembers receive a majority of their contributions from small donors. Thirty-one of 45, or 69 percent of Councilmembers, raised at least half of their donations from small donors, as shown on their chart below. Overall, Councilmembers raise 55 percent of their contributions from small donors. Participants in the public matching system raise 66 percent of their contributions from small donors, while non-participants raise 44 percent.

**Councilmembers ranked by the number of small donations
as a percentage of all donations**

	Participant / Non-particip ant	Rank (greatest percentage of small donations by count)	Number of donations 175 or under	Number of donations above 175	Total number of donations	Percentage of number of donations 175 or under
Barron, Inez	P	1	214	22	236	90.7%
Menchaca, Carlos	P	2	597	102	699	85.4%
Perkins, Bill	P	3	178	40	218	81.7%
Rosenthal, Helen	P	4	560	148	708	79.1%
Cabrera, Fernando	P	5	306	82	388	78.9%
Levin, Stephen	P	6	72	20	92	78.3%
Eugene, Mathieu	P	7	335	99	434	77.2%
Rose, Deborah	P	8	371	113	484	76.7%
Miller, I. Daneek	P	9	326	123	449	72.6%
Ulrich, Eric	P	10	338	131	469	72.1%
Dromm, Daniel	NP	11	319	126	445	71.7%
Reynoso, Antonio	P	12	403	160	563	71.6%
Espinal, Jr. Rafael L	NP	13	262	113	375	69.9%
Chin, Margaret	P	14	473	214	687	68.9%
Borelli, Joseph C	P	15	157	74	231	68.0%

Cumbo, Laurie	P	16	351	172	523	67.1%
Maisel, Alan	P	17	196	98	294	66.7%
Deutsch, Chaim	P	18	208	112	320	65.0%
Gibson, Vanessa	P	19	118	71	189	62.4%
Williams, Jumaane D	NP	20	391	237	628	62.3%
Matteo, Steven	P	21	196	120	316	62.0%
Richards, Donovan	P	22	336	208	544	61.8%
Kallos, Ben	P	23	268	185	453	59.2%
King, Andrew	NP	24	196	148	344	57.0%
Treyger, Mark	P	25	149	117	266	56.0%
Rodriguez, Ydanis	P	26	335	274	609	55.0%
Lander, Brad	NP	27	606	505	1111	54.5%
Constantinidis, Costa	P	28	288	241	529	54.4%
Van Bramer, James G	NP	29	570	509	1079	52.8%
Crowley, Elizabeth	NP	30	525	474	999	52.6%
Cohen, Andrew	NP	31	49	49	98	50.0%
Grodenschik, Barry	NP	32	120	122	242	49.6%
Koslowitz, Karen	P	33	144	150	294	49.0%
Levine, Mark	NP	34	450	487	937	48.0%
Torres, Ritchie	P	35	292	331	623	46.9%
Lancman, Rory	NP	36	330	391	721	45.8%
Johnson, Corey	NP	37	390	487	877	44.5%
Vallone, Paul	P	38	174	233	407	42.8%
Salamanca, Jr., Rafael	NP	39	102	204	306	33.3%
Ferreras-Copeland, Julissa	NP	40	225	475	700	32.1%
Cornegy, Jr., Robert	P	41	78	169	247	31.6%

Mark-Viverito, Melissa	NP	42	240	737	977	24.6%
Garodnick, Daniel	NP	43	45	311	356	12.6%
Koo, Peter	NP	44	41	403	444	9.2%
Greenfield, David	NP	45	37	413	450	8.2%
			12,361	10,000	22,361	55.3%

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Some Councilmembers, like Melissa Mark-Viverito and Dan Garodnick, raised funds for offices other than Council which have higher contribution limits than the Council.

This analysis was completed using data from the New York City Campaign Finance Board, downloaded on December 8, 2017.

Reinvent Albany is a non-profit group that advocates for open and accountable NY government, and is one of New York’s leading voices for Freedom of Information Law, open data and online transparency.

Represent.us is the nation's largest anti-corruption campaign, bringing together conservatives, progressives and everyone in between to pass anti-corruption laws in cities and states across the country. Anti-corruption laws stop political bribery, end secret money, and fix our broken elections. Represent.us NY is the New York chapter of Represent.us consisting entirely of volunteers.

Both organizations thank the New York City Campaign Finance Board for their assistance in reviewing the campaign finance data used in this report.