

SUBJ: Fair Elections for NY Praises Full Funding for Public Financing in FY 2026 Executive Budget



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STATEMENT FROM FAIR ELECTIONS FOR NEW YORK COALITION ON FY 2026 EXECUTIVE BUDGET

NEW YORK—Today, Governor Kathy Hochul has unveiled her executive budget for fiscal year 2026, which allocates \$114.5 million to the state’s small donor public campaign financing program, the amount requested by the New York Public Campaign Finance Board. The voluntary program, first implemented in the 2024 legislative elections, matches small donations from residents with public funds to support participating candidates.

In response, the Fair Elections for New York coalition issued the following statement:

“This budget sends a clear message that New York is committed to building a stronger, more inclusive democracy. By committing to fully fund the small donor public financing program as requested by the Public Campaign Finance Board, Governor Hochul is helping ensure that the voices of everyday New Yorkers are heard and valued in our elections.

“In its first cycle in 2024, the small donor program was widely embraced, with participation from candidates in over three-quarters of the state’s legislative districts, representing diverse political perspectives and communities across the state. The next run of the program will include candidates running for statewide offices, such as governor, attorney general, and comptroller. Fully funding the program builds on this powerful momentum and will give voters the ability to meaningfully engage in these critical elections.

“Fifteen years ago today, the Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* decision dismantled key limits on political spending. That decision has allowed the wealthiest donors increasingly to dominate political campaigns. New York’s public financing program stands as the strongest response by any state to counter the influence of big money by amplifying small-dollar contributions. At a time when democracy faces significant challenges nationwide, New York is proving that reforms like this can strengthen and revitalize our democratic systems.

“We applaud Governor Hochul for her leadership and urge Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Speaker Heastie, and other legislators to include the full \$114.5 million in the state’s final FY 2026 budget. This investment will ensure New York continues to lead in advancing democratic principles for all its residents.”