



Written Testimony of Daniel Hopkins, Communications Coordinator, Long Island Progressive Coalition

**Submitted to the New York State Legislature
at the Joint Legislative Budget Hearing
Concerning Local Government**

February 9, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of funding and implementing the statewide public financing program, enacted by this legislature in 2020, in the FY 2022-20223 budget. The Long Island Progressive Coalition is dedicated to policies that amplify the voices of everyday New Yorkers in our politics and we have been working alongside other grassroots groups in the Fair Elections for New York coalition since 2018.

The small donor public financing program, administered by the Public Campaign Finance Board at the State Board of Elections, is set to launch November 9, 2022, for the 2024 legislative elections. We support the inclusion of \$10.53 million for the administration of the program and \$10 million for future matching funds in Governor Hochul's executive budget. We encourage the Assembly and Senate to increase the appropriation for future matching funds to \$40 million, in line with the projected costs of the first legislative cycle of the program.

It is important that the program receives adequate funding for both administration and future matching funds this year to build confidence in the program for both candidates and voters. The potential benefits of this program cannot be overstated. We fought so hard for this law because:

- Public financing is key to fostering a multiracial democracy. It makes it possible for folks from all walks of life to run and win their campaigns, without needing to know or depend on people who can write big checks. Together with voting reforms, this policy brings more people into the democratic process.
- Large corporate contributors continue to spend huge sums on state elections, translating into disproportionate influence over the political process down the road.
- The weight and influence of these corporate and special interest donations and those of their lobbying firms, are at odds with the solutions our communities need – whether it's tenants' rights and affordable housing, real clean energy and climate solutions, good paying jobs, health care for all, consumer protections or ending police violence and mass incarceration.

Funding this program now is an investment in our democracy's future. We commend the budget lines in the executive budget for the Public Campaign Finance Board and urge the legislature to increase the funding for future matching funds to \$40 million.