



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

Senate announces Hearings on Campaign Finance Reform

MALCOLM A. SMITH April 21, 2009

Public financing and other proposals to be taken up at five hearings statewide

(Albany, NY) This June the New York State Senate Elections Committee, under the leadership of Chairman Joseph P. Addabbo Jr. (D-Howard Beach), will hold two hearings to address campaign finance reform and examine proposals to implement a system of public financing. Following years of refusal by the former Majority to consider and solicit proposals that would clean up our elections, these hearings mark the first time in decades that true campaign finance reform is a priority in the Senate.

The Elections Committee is conducting a series of five public hearings now through June (beginning Thursday, April 23rd in Buffalo) to reform elections, increase awareness and draw attention to voting practices. Those dedicated to campaign finance reform will be held June 3 in Albany and June 12 in New York City.

"The role of the Elections Committee should be and is to review our current laws constantly, find where improvements need to be made, and help raise awareness about voting rights and the importance of casting one's ballot," said Senator Addabbo. "There is a pressing need to reform the current system of campaign finance and we're going to examine fully the pros and cons of public financing and other potential changes."

Addabbo added, "This committee will not shy away from our responsibility just because some proposals may be controversial. This is our job and for the first time in a long time, the Senate is doing what needs to be done."

Senate Majority Leader Malcolm A. Smith said, "For too long, money has dictated the outcome of our elections. The mess we inherited was not created overnight but we're not wasting any time in fixing it. Campaign finance reform should be at the forefront of any discussions about how to clean up state government. Voters and government reform advocates have said the current system does not work, and they are right. The announcement of hearings on campaign finance reform by Senate Elections Committee Chair Joseph Addabbo demonstrates our commitment to lead our state into a new and more open era of government."

In addition to the hearings on campaign finance reform, further hearings will focus on:

- Voter registration (Buffalo/April 23, NYC/April 24)
- Casting a ballot/voting (Albany/May 11)
- Addressing that develop at polling places (Syracuse/May 14)
- Board of Elections oversight/election code reform (September)
- Oversight of the Election (November)