

CITIZENS UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

299 Broadway, Suite 700 ■ New York, New York 10007 ■ 212-227-0342

COMMON CAUSE/NY

74 Trinity Place, Suite 901 ■ New York, New York 10006 ■ 212 691-6421

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS/N.Y.S.

62 Grand Street ■ Albany, New York 12207 ■ 518 465-4162

NEW YORK PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP (NYPIRG)

107 Washington Avenue, 2nd Floor ■ Albany, New York 12210 ■ 518 436-0876

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release:

Thursday, November 5, 2009

For more information:

Dick Dadey/ CU (212) 227-0342

Susan Lerner/Common Cause (917) 670-6421

Barbara Bartoletti/LWV (518) 469-8905

Blair Horner/NYPIRG (518) 436-0876, x257

**CIVIC GROUPS ONCE AGAIN FIND SCORES OF APPARENT VIOLATIONS OF THE \$5,000 LIMIT ON CORPORATE CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS FOR 2008
ANALYSIS ALSO IDENTIFIES SCORES OF POSSIBLE CAMPAIGN FILING FAILURES
VIOLATIONS DEMONSTRATE NEED FOR AGGRESSIVE ENFORCEMENT
GROUPS URGE PASSAGE OF S.6157, WHICH CREATES A NEW ENFORCEMENT UNIT AND ADDITIONAL CAMPAIGN FINANCE DISCLOSURES**

A review of campaign filings with the state revealed scores of potential violations of the \$5,000 limit on corporate donations for calendar year 2008 and failures to complete campaign finance filings, civic groups charged today. Citizens Union, Common Cause/NY, the League of Women Voters/N.Y.S. and NYPIRG compiled a list of corporations that apparently exceeded the legal donation limit. They called for the creation of a new enforcement unit within the Board of Elections.

In addition to the list of nearly 350 apparent violators of the corporate contribution limits for last year, the groups also identified 5,316 contributions of over \$100 whose donors' addresses were not disclosed in the state's campaign finance database, 473 "24 hour notices" that were not reported in the state's database, and 576 committees with over \$1,000 in the bank who have still yet to file July 2009 disclosure reports as disclosed in the state's database.

This is the third year these groups have examined possible corporate contribution violators. The groups cautioned that the apparent violations may be the result of bookkeeping entry errors by campaign staff. Moreover, the groups cautioned that under current Election Law, contributing over the legal limits is only a criminal violation if it was done "knowingly and willfully." Nevertheless, the groups strongly urge the Board of Elections to investigate these possible violations.

The civic groups are pressing for passage of legislation to strengthen campaign finance enforcement. Legislation to achieve those changes is under consideration in the State Senate (S.6157, Sampson). The bill or similar legislation would, among other ethics changes, create an independent enforcement unit at the State Board of Elections and make broaden disclosure requirements by requiring more information of contributors and "bundlers."

-30-

Attachments: Lists of apparent violations and groups' letter to state Board of Elections