

Key Quotations from the Moreland Report

By Executive Order issued on July 2, 2013, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo established the Moreland Commission to investigate public corruption in the State of New York. Here are some key quotes from the report that are very helpful to our effort to pass a resolution calling for a constitutional amendment

p. 28. “It is time for fundamental and comprehensive reform and a campaign finance system that promotes public trust and democracy. Based upon our investigations to date, the Commission believes that reform must have four basic components:

- Lower contribution limits and the elimination of the loopholes that have allowed moneyed interests to pump millions of dollars into our elections.
- A robust disclosure regime to address the shadowy outside spending that began to enter our elections in the aftermath of the Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* decision.
- A small-donor match public financing system, similar to the one that has been in place in New York City since the late 1980s, that will empower ordinary New Yorkers and reduce the role of special interest money.
- An independent and effective agency to vigorously enforce our campaign finance laws.

These reforms are interconnected:

- Lowering contribution limits and closing the loopholes are essential to address the massive donations that are legally contributed to candidates and party committees by a very small number of very big donors.
- But simply curbing campaign contributions will have only a limited effect, because big money can reenter the system through independent committees that can raise and spend unlimited sums. Strengthened disclosure rules will allow the voters to learn who is using veiled political committees to attempt to influence our elections.
- A small-donor matching system will give candidates a viable alternative source of funding so that they do not have to turn to large, special interest donors to get the

money they need to compete effectively. With public funding, candidates can look to regular New Yorkers to finance their campaigns. This will reduce the power of special interests, make it easier for challengers and political outsiders to run for office, and give candidates an incentive to bring ordinary citizens into the political process.

· None of these reforms will work without timely and effective enforcement. For this reason, the Commission recommends a new campaign finance and election law enforcement agency with the powers and commitment to enforce the rules of our campaign finance system.”

P. 30. “Large Donors Dominate: Large donations by a small number of special interests and wealthy individuals dominate the campaign finance system.”

p. 33. “Pay to Play: Campaign contributions are often closely connected to lobbying. Lobbying and law firms themselves account for 10 to 12% of business contributions.⁴¹ As this Commission already has seen (and expects to further report) in a number of investigations in this area, trade associations and lobbyists treat campaign contributions as a critical part of their business. Political contributions appear to be the entrance fees that buy access.”

p. 34. “Again and again, our investigations have uncovered evidence showing that access to elected officials comes at a price, and that the fight over legislation is often between entities with vast financial resources at their disposal. When political power and access is so closely and disproportionately tied to large donations, the majority of New Yorkers are shut out of the political process.”