



Via Email

September 25, 2013

Bill de Blasio  
Democratic Candidate for Mayor

Joe Lhota  
Republican Candidate for Mayor

Dear Candidates De Blasio and Lhota:

New York City voters have just experienced an unprecedented level of outside spending during the Primary phase of the 2013 campaign. Most recent figures from the Campaign Finance Board reveal a total of more than \$13 million spent by non-candidate entities on "Independent Expenditures". Of that amount, \$5.68 million was spent attacking or supporting mayoral candidates. That's more money than either the de Blasio or Lhota campaigns collected in publicly supplied matching funds (\$2.9 million and \$1.9 million, respectively).

As we at Common Cause/NY have [pointed out](#), it doesn't have to be this way. Experience in Massachusetts shows when candidates enter into a People's Pledge it seriously curtails big money outside groups from drowning out the voices of average voters.

The People's Pledge is straightforward. Both candidates agree that in the event any third party organization or individual airs any independent expenditure broadcast (including radio), cable, satellite, online advertising and/or direct mail in support or opposition to either candidate, the candidate the expenditure benefits (i.e., the candidate supported or the candidate not opposed) agrees to pay 50% of the cost of the advertising buy to the charity of the opposing candidate's choice within an agreed timeframe. If not paid as agreed, the amount of the penalty increases.

When candidates and their campaigns work together to limit the influence of third party advertisements, they can successfully curtail pernicious outside spending and communicate more effectively themselves directly to the voters.

We have enclosed a proposed People's Pledge which we are simultaneously submitting to both of you. We call on both of you to enter into a People's Pledge, either as we propose or one substantially similar that you promptly negotiate.

With a People's Pledge, both the candidates and the voters win, and the health of our democracy receives a welcome boost. We at Common Cause/NY will be happy to assist in any negotiations or drafting of a revised People's Pledge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Lerner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susan Lerner  
Executive Director, Common Cause New York