



Linda A. Kabot

Proven Leadership You Can Count On!

Post Office Box 81, Quogue, NY 11959

Cell (631) 219-7218

Email: lindakabot@optonline.net

NEWS RELEASE

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PUBLIC FINANCING OF CAMPAIGNS

Linda Kabot, the designated candidate for the Office of Suffolk County Legislator for the 2nd Legislative District on the Republican, Conservative and Libertarian lines for the November 5 General Election ballot, issued the following statement (published on Patch.com) regarding public financing of campaign and the County's Local Law to Establish a Fair Elections Matching Fund.

Do You Think Taxpayer Money Should Go to Political Campaigns ? I don't --- but the incumbent County Legislator for the South Fork does ...

Public Financing of Campaigns is considered a "reform" that some people believe levels the field for upstart candidates and reduces the troubling trends of influence being exerted by big donors who have contributed to campaigns supporting certain elected officials and the political parties that they are affiliated with.

The Democratic County Legislators, with the exception of Legislator Al Krupski, all voted in favor of adopting "A Local Law to Establish A Fair Elections Matching Fund" in December 2017. This legislation takes effect with the 2021 elections and redirects funds from Suffolk County's share of casino money (Jake's 58) and creates a new bureaucracy to administer the program with an appointed Campaign Finance Board.

Read current Newsday article about Bellone's delay in choosing a non-partisan appointee for the new board that apparently needs to have its organizational structure and processes up and running immediately after Election Day Nov 5 – CLICK LINK: https://www.newsday.com/long-island/columnists/rick-brand/rick-brand-suffolk-campaign-finance-1.34560642?fbclid=IwAR29jOryIcKpl1yWsJfUSgv6jsKixNjyAEI1G-lzVDqcvbtO6AWpdj_RbnQ

Read prior Newsday article about the adoption of this ill-advised policy spearheaded by Legislator Calarco and co-sponsored by Legislators Fleming, Hahn, Gregory and Spencer – CLICK LINK: <https://www.newsday.com/long-island/politics/suffolk-public-financing-1.15523881>

How broke is Suffolk County? So broke that it has to borrow millions of dollars to pay its bills. Over \$300 Million has been borrowed by the Democratic Majority in the County Legislature to pay pension costs. The County's accumulated debt is over \$2 Billion. Suffolk County's bond rating is now just one grade above Junk Bond status. All that borrowing means that tax revenue goes to pay down debt rather than fixing roads, maintaining parks and providing other public services.

And, the Democratic Majority on the County Legislature (with the exception of Krupski) believes it is appropriate to redirect funds to public financing of campaigns ???

Money for politicians to get re-elected instead of helping to retire some junk bonds that the Legislature issued ???

They call this "fair elections"- Newsday reports that the legislation proposes a new system that allows legislative candidates to get as much as \$50,000 in a 4-to-1 public match to contributions of \$250 or less from "residents" in a legislative district. Starting in 2023, the county executive candidates could

qualify for as much as \$1 Million, while donations are capped at \$25,000 per individual. Legislative candidates taking such public funds would be limited to spending \$100,000 and the County Executive candidates would be limited to \$2 Million in expenses per election cycle.

Talk about playing games with other people's money. This legislation is modeled after New York City's public financing of campaigns and I believe is not necessary here at the local level of government – county and town elections. It is financially irresponsible.

I do not believe this will “give challengers more of a chance to unseat incumbents” or that it will “reduce corruption” and “politicians being in the pocket of big money” and “pay-to-play politics” which were reasons cited by some of the Democratic Legislators when voting in support of this policy.

I agree with Legislator Tom Cilmi, the Republican Minority Leader on the County Legislature, that “the county legislative districts are small enough that even without much money, those with deep roots can win ... Candidates, people of modest means can run for office and be successful.” I am one of those candidates – a person of modest means – who is running for County Legislator and has deep roots in the community.

My campaign fund has approximately \$10,000 while the incumbent South Fork County Legislator Bridget Fleming has \$50,000 reported on her July Campaign Disclosure Report.

Most donations that I have received are for under \$200 from local residents, typically associated with a fundraiser event and approximately half that amount goes to pay for the restaurant hospitality cost, plus invitations, postage costs. Most donations that Bridget Fleming has received appears to be coming from up-island special interests, developers, as well as thousands of dollars from Political Action Committees (PACs) for various labor groups and municipal employee unions.

For those that are curious about who has donated to what political campaign, the public can view Campaign Finance Disclosure Reports on-line on the State Board of Elections website – CLICK LINK <https://www.elections.ny.gov/recipientstext.html> (Note: After you open the link, Type in the last name of the candidate and then click on the campaign committee name for that particular person (when selecting, look for the column that specifies the elected position that person is running for, as they may have already run for other positions in the past – so that you can locate the current reports and then click to open and view each schedule of most recent electronic filings to see contributions and expenses.)

You may also find it interesting to look at Southampton Town Supervisor Jay Schneiderman's campaign finance reports and the Southampton Town Democratic Committee's Pre-Primary and Post-Primary Reports, where some of Jay's big donors have channeled their monies so as to not violate the campaign contribution limits that are imposed on town government races, which cannot exceed \$2012 in the aggregate per individual donor for the election cycle for the General Election, plus an additional \$1000 per individual donor if the candidate is involved in a Primary (thus, a total \$3012 max. aggregate per individual donor for the Southampton Town elected positions).

Politics is not for the faint of heart. Many say it's a dirty business, rife with political pay-to-pay. Is Public Financing of Political Campaigns a solution to “Drain the Swamp?” I do not think so ...

Choose Wisely who you wish to represent you in important County and Town elections – Vote for Proven Leadership You Can Count On – Vote for Integrity, Deep Roots, and Community-Minded Professionalism. I hope to earn your vote of confidence for the position of Suffolk County Legislator on Election Day, November 5.

QUESTION - Do You Think Taxpayer Money Should Go to Political Campaigns ? Why or Why Not ? Feel free to comment on this thread about this current issue ...