



MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT
S.4549-A (Squadron)
June 8, 2009

Title

An act to amend the election law, in relation to decreasing contribution limitations; and to repeal subdivision 3 of section 14-124 of the election law relating thereto

Summary

This bill would amend section 14-114 of the election law to lower contribution limits for candidates for statewide office to \$5,000; and for state senate and assembly to \$2,300, which conforms to the federal congressional contribution level. The bill would also lower the maximum individual contribution limit to candidates and party committees per calendar year.

Statement of Support

Citizens Union supports S.4549-A because it would take a measurable step towards reducing New York's high contribution limits and make them more consistent with jurisdictions nationwide. Citizens Union believes that the current "hard" and "soft" money contribution limits allow an unnecessary amount of money to flow into campaigns that Citizens Union believes is not only unnecessary, but makes it hard to track the impact of money. Although further contribution limit reductions are desirable, we believe this bill would diminish the perception that elected officials in New York State may be beholden to special interest groups and the campaign contributions these individuals and organizations make affects the integrity of decision-making in Albany.

For these reasons, Citizens Union encourages the Senate Standing Committee on Elections to promptly pass S.4549-A. Lowering contribution limits is only one part of a much-needed campaign finance reform package. Citizens Union also recommends that the Committee pass legislation to strengthen campaign finance enforcement and oversight; restrict, if not a ban, soft money; and require greater disclosure of contributions and expenses. Citizens Union appreciates the opportunity to share its views and welcomes the opportunity to work with the Legislature to accomplish comprehensive campaign finance reform this session.