



For Immediate Release

Jan. 7, 2010

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**COMMON CAUSE/NY WELCOMES GOVERNOR'S CALL FOR
DISCLOSURES OF GOOD GOVERNMENT DONORS**

Responding to Governor's Call, Watchdog Group Says: "No problem, we do it already"

As Common Cause/New York stated yesterday, there is much to like in the reform package Governor Paterson outlined in his State of the State speech yesterday. Common Cause/NY has long championed many of those proposals, including strengthening ethics oversight and campaign finance.

There was one particular comment that Common Cause didn't expect to hear, however. Governor Paterson said "so-called good government groups" are hiding "their donors behind walls of sanctimony." We assume the Governor was alluding to Common Cause, among others.

"We have a one word response to Governor Paterson's assertion: Fine," said Susan Lerner, Executive Director of Common Cause/New York. "Common Cause already discloses its donors and funding sources in its annual report and in federally required tax forms which are publicly available. Additionally, we provide specific enumeration of state donors in states, like Florida, that require additional disclosure of donors above a certain dollar amount. Our members are not ashamed to publicly stand for open and good government, and if disclosing names of our donors is what it takes to move the governor and legislature to enact meaningful reforms, we say 'Fine'."

Common Cause/New York would happily support a requirement in New York law that advocacy organizations that have federal tax-exempt status (501(c)(4) status) or tax deductible status (501(c)(3) tax status) be required to disclose the names of its donors over a certain threshold amount, such as \$500. Initial disclosures are already publicly available, including recent IRS Form 990s, which are available at:

- 1 2008: www.guidestar.org/FinDocuments/2008/311/705/2008-311705370-04bed925-9.pdf
- 2 2007: www.guidestar.org/FinDocuments/2007/311/705/2007-311705370-03c4f733-9.pdf
- 3 2006: www.guidestar.org/FinDocuments/2006/311/705/2006-311705370-02c50241-9.pdf

Common Cause's Donor Transparency Policy is available in full: CommonCause.org/DonorTransparency.

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