

# Vote YES! on THREE

*Vote for Open Elections on November 4<sup>th</sup>!*

Ballot Question #3 is a referendum on Open Elections for all New York City municipal offices.

- Eliminates advantages for party-backed candidates
- Eliminates requirement that independent candidates get three times the signatures of major party candidates
- Eliminates automatic ballot position preference for major party candidates
- Allows every voter to vote in primaries
- Allows every candidate to run in primaries
- Allows every voter to sign or witness petitions
- Allows insurgents to face party-backed candidates in November elections
- Breaks the stranglehold of party bosses
- 41 of the 50 largest U.S. cities already have open elections!
- Endorsed by former Mayor Giuliani, Assemblyman Straniere, Mayor Bloomberg, State Senator Mendez, City Councilman Espada, 'New Era Democrats', Independence Party, and many others

[Keep this flyer to take into the voting booth. Ballot questions are on the far right.](#)

# Vote **YES!** on Question 3

## For Open Elections

This year the most important political reform since the introduction of term limits is on the ballot for voter approval: a city wide referendum for Nonpartisan Elections.

Appearing on the ballot (way to the right on the ballot) as Question 3, Open Elections, otherwise known as Nonpartisan Elections, will bring New York City up to speed with the other 80% of the fifty largest American cities, who currently use this method of voting in their municipal elections.

Open elections means simply this - there will be two rounds of voting in which every voter, regardless of how they are registered, gets to cast a ballot for any candidate of their choice.

Currently there are over 800,000 voters in New York registered as either minor party members or as unaffiliated voters and who have no say in the crucial first round of voting.

And since elections are funded by all the taxpayers of the city -- all the taxpayers should get to participate in the election.

Opening up elections boils down to this: It's the big shots versus the little people, because this reform takes power out of the hands of the political bosses and puts it back into the hands of the ordinary voters.

There's something wrong with a system where everyone knows in advance who's going to win every seat on the City Council, before even one vote is cast.

This year only 4% of the voters of New York City cast ballots in the all important Democratic Party primaries which, in nearly every instance, determine the winner in the general election.

"YES" on Question 3 makes our elections more open, more fair and more competitive.

With only 1 or 2 exceptions the winners in this year's 51 city council seats are all but determined. In a number of districts, there is only one name on the ballot -- just like in the old Soviet Union.

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*Open elections are the most important political reform to be introduced since term limits. It's the little guys versus the party bosses.*

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Politicians call that democracy. Do you?

By taking power out of the hands of political bosses, Nonpartisan elections might bring a new crop of candidates with diverse backgrounds in fields of education, business, and the arts. Insurgent candidates won't be at the mercy of party bosses who use New York's arcane ballot access laws and considerable legal resources to throw them off the ballot.

Under the present system independent candidates must get 2,700 signatures to qualify for the ballot, compared to only 900 for Democrats. Then they are relegated to the sixth column of the voting machine, where they can be ignored. The partisan candidates get the first five columns. As a result, even when they get on the ballot, they can't get the financing or the media attention that would allow voters to take them seriously.

Is that fair? And is it any wonder that most sensible people don't even bother trying to run?

The result is that if there's any competition at all, it's almost always in the Democratic primaries. But only Democrats can run in those primaries. And only Democrats can vote in those primaries. And relatively few actually do.

With the passage of Question 3 every potential candidate would need to gather 900 signatures from any registered voter, witnessed by any registered voter, to get on the ballot. If they qualify, they have the option of putting their party affiliation next to their name, but are not required to do so. Ballot position won't be based on party labels. Every candidate has an even chance and must make a direct appeal to voters and connect to them based on their issues. And every registered voter will have the chance to vote in the primary, not just people who register in the favored parties.

The objections of the Democrats to this reform have been accommodated. The reform will not take effect until 2009, so it will not benefit anyone currently in office, such as Mayor Bloomberg; And party labels will be permitted next to each candidate's name, which meets the objections of politicians who think people are too stupid to know who to vote for otherwise.

This will be a tremendous reform if adopted.

We must restore the power of democracy to the people of New York. It's a matter of fairness, of equal access to the ballot for every citizen, not just the politicians' favorites.

The vote may be close. Talk it up! On **November 4<sup>th</sup>**, vote **Yes on 3**. Another opportunity like this won't come along again anytime soon.