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Rootstrikers project at Demand Progress | Sierra Club | U.S. PIRG

June 22, 2017

The Honorable Dannel Malloy  
Office of the Governor  
210 Capital Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Gov. Malloy,

The Connecticut Citizens' Election Program was passed to address rampant corruption in the state and to give everyday people a bigger voice in politics and the policymaking process. Its passage and successful implementation made the state a national leader in creating a democracy that works for all of us.

**You must fight to fully fund the Citizens' Election Program in the state budget to maintain its viability for future candidates and retain public faith in Connecticut's institutions.**

As a long-time supporter of the program when you were mayor and as the only governor in Connecticut history to participate in it, you clearly believe in and understand the importance of the Citizens' Election Program. And as chair of the Democratic Governors Association, you can set an example for your colleagues that fighting for stronger, more accountable elections is critical for our country.

With increasing voter anger about the power of big money in politics and corruption scandals exploding in Washington, D.C. the last the thing state lawmakers should do is take us backwards to the "Corrupticut" days.

As well-respected think tank Demos found in its 2013 study of the program, the Citizens' Election Program has allowed candidates and elected officials to spend more time with their constituents, broadened the donor base to be more reflective of the state's diversity, and opened up the process to allow more people to run for office who would otherwise be blocked by the cost of entry. In short, it has created a stronger democracy in Connecticut.

As you and your colleagues in the legislature know, the program has reduced the power of lobbyists in Hartford. The Citizens' Elections Program has allowed candidates to spend less time dialing for dollars from wealthy special interests. It has made politicians in the state more accountable to the people they are elected to represent—their constituents. With expansion of the bottle bill and collection of

escheats—bills previously blocked because of the power of special interests in the state—the system has been cost-effective too.

There are difficult choices that must be made regarding the budget this year, but safeguarding the integrity of our state's elections is not one of them. Defunding this program just 17 months before the next election will give wealthy interests more influence in Connecticut elections and make it harder for regular people to be heard. **We're counting on you to fight to fully fund this program in the state budget.**

Signed,

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