

FOREWORD

By Joseph Griffo

Presidential elections should be a time when the entire nation is galvanized into action through a vibrant democracy because every citizen has a voice in setting the nation's direction for the next four years.

Sadly, that is not the reality. By October, 12 to 15 swing states are all that matters in presidential campaigns. Much of the nation is shunted into red or blue piles. We in New York know how it feels to be treated as if we were politically irrelevant: my entire state and its voters are ignored by one party and taken for granted by the other. That's not the democracy I want to leave as my legacy to the future. I want to help create a vibrant new democracy that sparks activism instead of abetting apathy.

The National Popular Vote bill detailed in *Every Vote Equal* will ensure that the voice of the people is heard at every level of government. Isn't that what common sense tells us should happen in the first place?

The current system does not serve the people. According to research by National Popular Vote, presidential candidates concentrate over two-thirds of their advertising money and campaign visits in just six very close states, and over 98% of their advertising money in just 15 battleground states. Something is wrong with this picture.

Elections are the cornerstone of our democracy. There is nothing more important in the American system of government than elections that attract voters to examine the challenges of our time. And elections must deal with all the people and all the issues, not just those important to a small handful of states.

The current system of electing a President effectively disenfranchises millions of Americans because they live in states where one candidate or the other has a safe majority. At a time when America needs its citizens to be involved in government, we need to ensure that every vote counts and that the popular vote is the true measure of victory.

For these reasons and more I am proud to be the lead sponsor of the National Popular Vote bill in the New York Senate. We passed the bill in 2010 by a vote of 52–7, but the Assembly didn't get the bill through in 2010. I will continue to push this legislation until New York is on board with the effort. The American people support the principle of a popular vote for President, and I believe New York and the country will be well served once we make this reform a reality.