

Sal Albanese Joins Fight to Let Voters, Not Billionaires, Fund Campaigns

A pioneer behind NYC's small-donor matching funds program joins Make Voters the Donors to advance the national Voter Dollars plan

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, July 28, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Make Voters the Donors (MVTd), the nonpartisan campaign for public financing of election campaigns with [Voter Dollars](#), today announced that Sal Albanese has joined the organization as chief political strategist. Albanese, a former NYC Councilman and three-time mayoral candidate, has been one of America's earliest and most relentless champions of citizen-financed elections.



Sal Albanese, Chief Political Strategist, Make Voters the Donors 2026

Nearly four decades ago, a young Brooklyn city councilman warned that unless the money changed, New York would be "run for a few wealthy interests and by big business." Then he did something about it.

Today, with billion-dollar campaigns the norm and just 17% of Americans telling Pew Research Center* they trust the federal government to do what is right, near a seven-decade low, Albanese is back on the front lines.

Albanese does not just talk about campaign finance reform. He helped write it, pass it, and paid the price for living by it.

What Are Voter Dollars?

The Voter Dollars proposal is disarmingly simple and democratic: every registered voter receives an online account of campaign funds to donate to the candidates of their choice. Candidates

could fund fully competitive campaigns entirely from the voters they seek to represent. No more dialing for dollars. No more excuses for taking money from special interests, corporations, or the ultra-wealthy.

Why Sal Albanese? A Record of Fighting Big Money

- Sal helped write the law. During his 15 years on the New York City Council, Albanese was one of the original sponsors of the legislation that became New York City's landmark small-donor matching funds program, enacted in 1988 and copied by jurisdictions nationwide for more than three decades.

- He pushed it further. In 2019, as a commissioner on the New York City Charter Revision Commission, he formally proposed that New York adopt a [democracy voucher program](#) modeled on Seattle's, the direct forerunner of the Voter Dollars plan MVTD is now driving nationally. In Seattle, more than 48,000 residents donated democracy vouchers in 2021, more than double the program's first cycle.*

- He lived it. In his campaigns for New York City mayor in 1997, 2013, and 2017, Albanese refused every dollar from real estate developers and lobbyists, betting his own political future on a simple principle: candidates should answer to voters, not donors.

"Sal is what every political leader should be: someone who listens to, represents, and serves the people. When the fight for Voter Dollars is won, we can fill Congress and the White House with patriots like Sal who truly live out the meaning of our nation's creed," said Dr. [Dan McMillan](#), Founder and Executive Director of Make Voters the Donors.

"I am excited to be part of this effort to revolutionize the way campaigns are financed in our country so our political system can reflect the will of average Americans. We must end the legal bribery, or we will continue to be a failed democracy," said Albanese.

As Chief Political Strategist, Albanese will draw on decades of hard-won experience in political reform, electoral systems, and governance to help make Voter Dollars law: transparent, administratively simple, and built to last across political cycles.

Who Is Sal Albanese? From Brooklyn Classrooms to City Hall



Sal Albanese, NYC Councilman 2013

Albanese's story is a classic American one. An immigrant kid from Italy who grew up in Brooklyn, he spent 11 years as a New York City public school teacher before entering public life and has taught as an adjunct professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and St. Joseph's College. He holds a B.A. from the City University of New York, an M.A. from New York University, and a J.D. from Brooklyn Law School.

A Top Fighter Against Money in Politics

Few Americans can speak about money in politics from as many vantage points. Albanese is a candid, quotable, no-notes interview, available for broadcast, podcast, print, editorial boards, and op-eds on topics including:

- The law that changed New York, from the man who helped write it. What 35+ years of the nation's premier matching funds program proved, and where it stopped short.
- Voter Dollars and democracy vouchers. The case for putting campaign cash directly in voters' hands, and what Seattle's real-world experiment already shows.
- What it costs to say no. A three-time mayoral candidate on running without developer and lobbyist money, and what his experience reveals about who really picks our candidates before voters ever see a ballot.
- The reform both sides can love. Why citizen-funded campaigns are winning support across the political spectrum while nearly everything else divides us.

About Make Voters the Donors

Make Voters the Donors is a nonpartisan organization founded by Dr. Dan McMillan, PhD, a writer, historian, and former prosecutor, on a mission to restore government by the people. MVTD advances the Voter Dollars proposal, under which every registered voter receives campaign funds to donate to candidates they support, evening the playing field and ensuring that political power flows from citizens broadly, not from concentrated private wealth. The organization focuses on public education, coalition building, and common-sense reform that transcends partisanship. Learn more at makevotersthedonors.org.

To schedule an interview with Sal Albanese, contact Maria Sliwa at maria@makevotersthedonors.org.

* Pew research report: <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2025/12/04/public-trust-in-government-1958-2025/>

* Heerwig/McCabe report hosted by the City of Seattle: <https://bit.ly/4flv2PV>

Maria Sliwa

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