Today's Lead: Tackling Outside Spending In City Races

Posted on Aug 27, Posted by Mike Muller Category The Eye-Opener

Councilman Brad Lander is proposing legislation aimed at cracking down on spending by outside groups in city races. Such " independent expenditures " exploded following the Citizens United court decision, which allows near-unlimited spending, as long as the groups don't directly co-ordinate with campaigns. Lander's plan would close a loophole that allows corporations to spend lavishly on candidates through LLCs and require mailings and similar communications to include a notice outlining who paid for them.

Of particular concern to Lander is the real estate industry-backed "Jobs 4 NY" committee. It's already spent $1.35 million - including $167,000 in support of Brooklyn Councilwoman Sara González and $110,000 to back Paul Vallone in Queens - and aims to spend $10 million citywide. The PAC supports several council incumbents who are up for re-election, which might make it difficult to pass during an election year. But even some candidates who've received its support, like Brooklyn's Laurie Combo, say it's unwelcome and support Lander's proposal.

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