§ 14-200. Legislative findings and intent. The legislature finds that reform of New York state's campaign finance system is crucial to improving public confidence in the state's democratic processes and continuing to ensure a government that is accountable to all of the voters of the state regardless of wealth or position. The legislature finds that New York's current system of campaign finance, with its large contributions to candidates for office and party committees, has created the potential for and the appearance of corruption. The legislature further finds that, whether or not this system creates actual corruption, the appearance of such corruption can give rise to a distrust in government and citizen apathy that undermines the democratic operation of the political process.

The legislature also finds that the high cost of running for office in New York discourages qualified candidates from running for office and creates an electoral system that encourages candidates to spend too much time raising money rather than attending to the duties of their office, representing the needs of their constituents, and communicating with voters.

The legislature amends this article creating a new title to this article to reduce the possibility and appearance that special interests exercise undue influence over state officials; to increase the actual and apparent responsiveness of elected officials to all voters; to encourage qualified candidates to run for office; and to reduce the pressure on candidates to spend large amounts of time raising large contributions for their campaigns.

The legislature also finds that the system of voluntary public financing furthers the government's interest in encouraging qualified candidates to run for office. The legislature finds that the voluntary public funding program will enlarge the public debate and increase participation in the democratic process. In addition, the legislature finds that the voluntary expenditure limitations and matching fund program reduce the burden on candidates and officeholders to spend time raising money for their campaigns.

Therefore, the legislature declares that these amendments further the important and valid government interests of reducing voter apathy, building confidence in government, reducing the reality and appearance of corruption, and encouraging qualified candidates to run for office, while reducing candidates' and officeholders' fundraising burdens.