

# New York Coalition



## For Open Government, Inc.

*Advocating for timely access to information & meaningful citizen participation*

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### PRESS RELEASE

**RE: The New York Coalition For Open Government Calls Upon The Mayors of Buffalo, Syracuse and Albany, to Debate Their Opponents Before the June 22<sup>nd</sup> Primary Election**

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Election debates are an important part of our democratic process. Voters are provided very few opportunities where they can see and evaluate candidate responses to questions.

The Mayors of several large cities across New York State have primary challengers. All too often incumbent candidates seeking re-election run unopposed, providing the voters without any choice. Getting on the ballot to run for public office in New York State is a process that is more difficult than it should be. Incumbent Mayors seeking re-election have tremendous advantages as far as getting on the ballot, fundraising and media attention.

Debates are one of the few opportunities where the voices of election challengers can be heard on a level playing field. All too often incumbent office holders refuse to participate in debates or agree to one limited debate. Refusing to debate or participating in just one debate is a disservice to the public.

Mayoral debates have already occurred in New York City and Rochester. The office of Mayor is an important position and every candidate should face questions regarding their past actions and future plans in a debate format.

The upcoming primary election is less than a month away. The New York Coalition For Open Government calls upon Mayors Byron Brown, Ben Walsh and Kathy Sheehan to participate in more than one primary debate as an important public service, so that voters can make an informed decision when casting their ballot.