



for Rochester City School Board

September 7, 2011

Interfaith Alliance of Rochester
PO Box 25245
Rochester, NY 14625

League of Women Voters/RMA
PO Box 10573
Rochester, NY 14610

Dear Interfaith Alliance and League of Women Voters,

I have the utmost respect for both organizations (the League of Women Voters and the Interfaith Alliance), but the Fair Campaign Pledge is a source of frustration to me. By the time I received my invitation to sign the pledge, I had given my approval to the last piece of literature for the School Board primary. By this date (the press conference), I had delivered my last tray of mail to the Post Office. The timetable was identical for the 131st Assembly seat primary last year.

You are missing the boat when they ignore primary races. You are ignoring the reality of politics in the city when you fail to acknowledge what everyone else knows: that the Democratic Party primary IS the election in the City of Rochester. I respectfully suggest that you mail to candidates the day their petitions are filed or validated, with an appropriate deadline, such as seven days following the deadline for third party submissions to the Board of Elections.

My primary materials display how I campaign. I want the primary - and general - election to be about issues. But because newspaper editors and TV newsroom managers generally don't cover elections before the Labor Day weekend, the opportunity for earned media - on the issues - passes with little media attention. This represents an opportunity and a challenge for Fair Campaign champions: motivate the media, and give them something before the Labor Day weekend to cover!

I thought about boycotting the pledge in frustration. All the campaign material there is for my campaign this primary season is approved, printed and mailed. What difference can it make NOW to sign a pledge?

But, I do believe in Fair Campaigns. Instead, I choose to use the signing ceremony to deliver this letter of concern to each of your respective organizations, and ask that you take this concern very seriously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Willa Powell
Candidate of Rochester City School Board