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BY FAX AND MAIL

September 9, 1997

**B. Thomas Golisano, President
Paychex
911 Panorama Trail South
Rochester, New York 14625**

RE: Leading the Way to a People's Constitutional Convention

Dear Mr. Golisano:

This letter follows up our public exchange on July 7th after your presentation at the We the People Congress. You had just spoken forcefully in advocating a constitutional convention as a means of addressing some of this state's most chronic governmental problems. Yet you concluded your remarks by stating that before giving financial support to the campaign to achieve a constitutional convention, you would be "watch[ing] the polls".

It was this surprising final statement that compelled my response. Identifying myself as "someone who works in citizen action and the non-profit world that is trying to achieve change", I pointed out that reform "doesn't happen without money" and expressed the view that you should be guided by your convictions, not the polls. I stated:

"...the polls follow people like you. If you come forward with your name, with your state visibility and with your money, the polls will follow after you. Your confidence will inspire other confidence, more money, more people, more votes, and the polls will be alive. They will follow you. You can't follow the polls, you have it backwards." (at p. 101)

You were gracious enough to thank me for what you described as "one of the most forthright appeals I've heard in a long time" -- to which I replied, "think about a forthright answer".

More than two months have since elapsed. At each of the two monthly meetings of We the People Congress, I inquired about whether you had come forward with any financial response. At the August 4th meeting, the first substantive resolution on the agenda was prefaced with the results of a recent Quinnipiac statewide public opinion poll. The poll found that although most people were unaware that the question about a constitutional convention would be on the ballot, they were inclined to vote "yes" when informed of that fact. Confronted by such poll result, We the People

Congress acted decisively. The Congress resolved "to do everything possible within its power to press forward with a public information and education program". To this end, we passed a further resolution specifying the public information projects to be undertaken: "Vote 'Yes'" newspaper advertisements, bumper stickers, lawn signs, and brochures. Such specific projects were conditioned on finding "a sponsor(s) ...to cover the cost" -- which totaled nearly one million dollars.

At our September 2nd meeting, the Congress learned that no benefactor had been found to underwrite our informational campaign to promote a constitutional convention and that the New York AFL-CIO had responded to its own survey showing public sentiment in favor of a constitutional convention by launching a multi-million dollar propaganda blitz -- fashioned by hired public relations consultants -- to divert the attention of voters from the very reason for holding a constitutional convention: our state government is inefficient, dysfunctional, unresponsive, and polluted by PAC money and political self-interest. During the morning session of that meeting, we undertook a peaceful demonstration outside the AFL-CIO's Albany headquarters, at which Bob Schulz publicly read a letter, addressed to its leadership. Among its eloquent concluding words were the following:

"The problem is, of course, we, the ordinary, non-aligned citizen-taxpayers are doing what we are doing on a small scale because that is all we can afford. We are doing what we know how to do -- bumper stickers, buttons, fliers, and possibly a series of newspaper ads if a financial angel were to come our way. But the unions are out to throttle the ordinary, non-aligned citizens by their ability to spend a lot of money, which they coerce every year from the paychecks of millions of workers, without having to justify it!" (at p. 4)

In the face of such a well-funded public relations campaign for a "No" vote, you, who spoke so powerfully at the July 7th meeting, have an extraordinary opportunity to be our "financial angel" and help to "level the playing field". This would certainly be consistent with your "wholehearted" support of a People's convention, as reported in the June 20th Albany Times-Union, which quoted you as saying "If there is something I can do financially to help the cause, I probably will."

Less than two months remain until the November 4th election. The time for patriotic decision-making is now when you can most make the difference and when there is still time for your leadership example to serve as a model for others.

In soliciting your financial contribution for a constitutional convention, I do so having made my own financial contribution to the cause of a People's convention. There has not been a single formal meeting of We the People Congress -- and I have attended all but one -- to which I have not made at least a \$100 contribution. At the September 2nd meeting, I wrote an additional \$1,000 check, earmarked for the printing of as many bumper stickers and buttons as that money would purchase. To date, I have contributed \$1,750 of my own money.

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This is, of course, small pocket change to you -- a man who the Albany Times-Union reports to have assets ranging from \$150 - \$500 million and who spent \$6.5 million to run for governor in 1994. I, therefore, respectfully invite you to match my \$1,750 contribution by some exponential number that is consistent with your conscience, convictions, and financial means -- and, additionally, to publicly rally popular support for a People's constitutional convention from the 217,000 New Yorkers who gave you their vote of confidence in the 1994 election.

Your support can make the difference!

Yours for a People's constitutional convention,



ELENA RUTH SASSOWER

Representative to the We the People Congress
from the 37th Senatorial District

cc: Bob Schulz, Chairman
We the People Congress

Enclosures (by mail)


1. Transcript excerpts (pp. 36-37, 100-102) from the 7/7/97 meeting
2. Resolutions #20 and #21 from the 8/4/97 meeting
3. We the People Congress' 9/2/97 ltr to AFL-CIO leadership
4. "Golisano Joins a Bid for Change", Albany Times-Union, 6/20/97

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1 means it will cost the residents of New York State 12 and
2 a half cents a year for the opportunity to rewrite,
3 reform and restructure how government works. And I'd say
4 that's pretty good.

5 But I want to make it look even better by telling
6 you, do we know how much the state spends on a per person
7 basis every year? It's like \$2,200 per person, every
8 year. Plus the state has a tremendous amount of
9 influence on how much local government spends. If you
10 total it all up state and local government spend about
11 \$4,300 for every resident in the state of New York. Who
12 would ever question spending 12 and a half cents a year
13 over a 20 year period to make sure that we do it right?
14 To me it's a non-event. And the state budget being in
15 excess of 60 billion or 65 billion dollars, 50 million
16 dollars on a one time charge for a 20 year period is
17 nothing.

18 Now my personal involvement in this thing, to 
19 sort of sum up here -- is I do plan to be an advocate for
20 the constitutional convention. I get a lot of questions
21 about donating money to help with this issue. And I have
22 a very open mind to this. I think I've proven in the
23 past that I'm not bashful, or backward about coming forth
24 with resources to help out a particular cause. I think

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1 it's going to be very interesting over time to watch the
2 polls. I think as time goes on, between now and
3 November, the media is going to make us more and more of
4 a focus. And there's going to be more and more
5 information out there about how we're doing. And I think
6 as any organization involved with this process it would
7 behove us to constantly be aware of that information, and
8 maybe determine how much effort and how much resources
9 has to go into this based on the information that's out
10 there. And it's going to be very important.

11 And as Bob mentioned earlier, remember the bond
12 issue that we rejected overwhelmingly a year or two ago?
13 Everybody thought that thing was going to pass. And
14 there was very little information out about it. Very
15 little debate about it. And then New York Staters just
16 rose to the occasion and just said no, flat out by an
17 overwhelming majority. So I have a lot of confidence in
18 the people of the state of New York. Just we have to
19 give them the opportunity and the forum to display their
20 knowledge.

21 So with that I'd like to say thank you for
22 allowing me to come here and make these remarks. And
23 Bob, thanks again for driving to Rochester.


24 CHAIRMAN SCHULZ: This is discussion

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1 But I like the quality and the education level and
2 everything I've heard here today, so I will support what
3 you're doing.

4 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

5 MS. SASSOWER: My name is Elena 
6 Sassower. I'm from the 37th District. I'm also the
7 Coordinator and Co-Founder of a non-profit, non-partisan
8 citizen's organization called the Center for Judicial
9 Accountability. Which happens to be one of your clients,
10 Mr. Golisano.

11 MR. GOLISANO: A happy client, I hope?

12 MS. SASSOWER: Very much so. But we
13 would be happier to know that you are supportive of the
14 constitutional convention idea in a way that is truly
15 meaningful; with money.

16 MR. GOLISANO: Could you be a little
17 more direct?

18 MS. SASSOWER: I have to say, with all
19 due respect, it certainly is a tribute to Bob that you
20 have taken of your valuable time to be here today and we
21 appreciate it. But something has to continue on after
22 this wonderful event. Bob has been working tirelessly,
23 unselfishly, and from his own pocket to make this happen
24 in every way possible. And Bob does not have quite your

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1 resources.

2 As someone who works in citizen's action and ^{the}
3 non-profit world that is trying to achieve change, it
4 doesn't happen without money. You said -- and this
5 really has prompted the question, more than anything
6 else, because you've invited it with your remarks -- you
7 made reference to the fact that you have certain assets
8 at your command. And with that acknowledgement you then
9 made reference to, well, you would be watching it ^{the polls}
10 closely. That's not how it works. You either believe
11 and you come with us because you know it's right. Or you
12 watch the polls? Now the polls follow people like you.
13 If you come forward with your name, with your state
14 visibility and with your money, the polls will follow
15 after you. Your confidence will inspire other
16 confidence, more money, more people, more votes, and the
17 polls will be alive. They will follow you. You can't
18 follow the polls, you have it backwards.

19 So I always kind of -- in closing, I have to say
20 that I have had the privilege of participating in the
21 most nominal way in what Bob has been doing. And it is
22 something magnificent and awesome. And I have come to
23 every meeting, formal meeting -- except unfortunately the
24 last one when I was in DC, and I apologize, and if there

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1 was anyway I could have been here I would have been
2 here -- but in all the past meetings that have been held
3 I always seem to come up at some final point and say, You
4 know it's good, all this talk, but it's about money. And
5 it is about money.

6 So, I guess here too I'm filling that role and I
7 hope that you know that that's the way things work in
8 this world. Thank you.

9 MR. GOLISANO: I want you to know that
10 was one of the most forthright appeals I've heard in a
11 long time. Thank you, very much.

12 MS. SASSOWER: Think about a forthright
13 answer.

14 MR. KETCHAM: Dave Ketcham, Tioga
15 County. There's too much flavor in some of these
16 arguments that everybody who is against having a
17 convention is our designated enemy.

18 First off, it ain't true. Second, it's dangerous
19 because if we set them up as enemies, we may turn them
20 all into enemies. Certainly we can find some enemies and
21 all we can do is fight them. Many of the people against
22 our convention are scared, scared for a good reason. For
23 example Sierra Club is scared that something might happen
24 to Article 14 about conservation. Teachers -- well, many