

Money Talks by Dan Jacoby

Michael Bloomberg is spending about \$100 million in an effort to convince New Yorkers to retain him as mayor for another four years. Lately, this has become a topic of some discussion in the media. His main opponent, Fernando Ferrer, is all but crying “foul”.

But is it actually foul?

In a perfect world, the media would spend time, both in research and on-air, telling the truth. They would get beyond the press releases to tell us what’s really going on. Unfortunately, this is not happening. Not one major media outlet in New York City balances the mayor’s press releases on job creation, education test scores, taxes, security, or many other issues, with the truth that the mayor doesn’t want us to know.

Here are some truths that the mayor – and the media – won’t tell you:

- Job creation lags far behind the national average.
- Education test scores: There are three unstated facts:
 - Some scores are up, but others are down.
 - The tests themselves are being made easier in order to raise scores.
 - Some scores are rising because the lowest-performing students are being held back, so they aren’t taking those tests.
- Taxes were raised in 2002 because we faced a crisis caused by the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center. But since then, the economy has rebounded. Why, then, are we facing continued deficits and more cuts, instead of a repeal of the emergency tax hikes?
- Security – the main “security” measure this mayor has taken recently consists of unconstitutional and completely ineffective bag searches on the subways. This modern Maginot Line does nothing to stop, slow down, catch or deter terrorists. Instead, it takes away our freedom in the phony name of security, wastes our resources, and does nothing to make things better.

The truth is, this mayor isn’t nearly as good as his image. But he has spent so much money burnishing that image that even the major media has been fooled.

There are plenty of examples of how people and groups spending a lot of money have wielded tremendous influence over everything from elections to legislation to judicial rulings. This race is no different. Mayor Bloomberg has been using his vast personal wealth to buy votes – or at least good press – for the past four years. Many groups whose budgets have been slashed due to city budget cutbacks have been silenced through Bloomberg’s donations.

We live in an imperfect world, a world where wealthy people can buy almost anything they want – including elections. In New York City, where the media outlets are numerous and well-funded, one might think the truth would be reported. Unfortunately, that is not the case.