



Big Money Bulletin

Inside

Page 2

Big donors trump local control
Lawmakers milk budget process
Voters take backseat to donors

Page 3

Celebrating WDC's first decade
Ethics reform bill to be debated
Promoting change in your backyard

Page 4

News briefs

Get Big Money



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'Fighting Bob Fest' set for September 10

The fourth annual Fighting Bob Fest will be held on Saturday, September 10 at the Sauk County Fairgrounds in Baraboo. Fighting Bob Fest is an annual progressive "chautauqua" featuring local and national speakers, networking opportunities and entertainment. Last year more than 4,000 people attended, making it the largest political convention in Wisconsin.

Fighting Bob Fest 2005 will celebrate Fighting Bob La Follette's 150th birthday and the 40th anniversary of the federal Voting Rights Act, and serve as a homecoming of the People's Legislature citizen assemblies held around the state and a launching pad for the next phase of the People's Legislature reform movement. Wisconsin Democracy Campaign director Mike McCabe will be among the featured speakers.

National speakers include Michigan congressman John Conyers, "Democracy Now" radio host Amy Goodman and Texas populist Jim Hightower.

The chautauqua movement was started in the late 19th century in the southwestern New York town of Chautauqua. By the early 1900s, a traveling chautauqua circuit had developed to spread the opportunity for Americans to share information and join in the discussion of public issues. In its heyday early in the 20th century, there were 21 traveling chautauqua companies operating on 93 circuits, reaching 35 million people a year.

For more information about this year's Fighting Bob Fest, go to the event's web site at www.fightingbobfest.com or call **608-658-1055**. Though not required, you can register in advance for the event online at www.fightingbobfest.com/register.htm

New weblog is latest feature of WDC web site

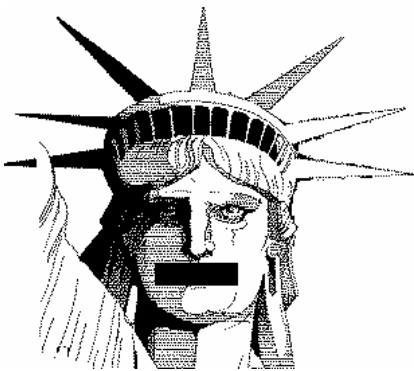
A new addition to the Democracy Campaign's award-winning web site is the "Big Money Blog," a weblog of news, information and opinion about the money in Wisconsin politics, corruption at the Capitol and the condition of our democracy.

Recent entries deal with subjects ranging from budget pork and secret electioneering by Wisconsin's anti-abortion lobby to cost overruns on the state's voter-list contract with Accenture and congressional testimony by a computer programmer on how easy it is to alter vote totals and fix election results. There's all this and much more on the Big Money Blog at www.wisdc.org/blog/bigmoneyblog.html

Communities losing to big donors

Wealthy special interests are blocking communities from tailoring laws to fit the needs and wishes of their citizens, a new Wisconsin Democracy Campaign study shows.

The report, “Gagging Democracy,” explains the growing trend of state preemption – legislation overruling actions by locally elected officials. The



analysis shows big campaign donors who favor state preemption of local decisions have given state lawmakers seven times more campaign money than groups favoring local control. Republicans who

control the Legislature have received 13 times more campaign donations from preemption supporters.

Business, manufacturing, tourism, construction and other wealthy interests supporting state proposals to overturn local actions on such issues as smoking in bars and restaurants, workers’ wages, public land use, billboard removal and school start dates have contributed \$8.1 million to current legislators. Local officials, health and environmental groups and selected labor unions that oppose state preemption have given \$1.7 million.

Governor Jim Doyle, who has signed into law at least four preemption proposals since taking office, has received \$2.5 million from the special interests that favor preemption, more than twice the \$1.15 million in contributions he has received from groups opposed to preemption.

“Whether it’s a living wage ordinance in La Crosse or a smoking ban in Oshkosh or the people of Douglas County preventing utilities from seizing public land to string transmission wires, locally elected officials are responding to the wishes of local voters,” WDC director Mike McCabe said. “Then the state representatives of these very same voters are overruling these local actions. It doesn’t make sense until you follow the money.”

The study is available on the Democracy Campaign’s web site at www.wisdc.org/pr080405.php

Legislators milk budget process

State legislators raised nearly \$1.4 million in campaign contributions while the state budget was being shaped, according to campaign finance reports covering fundraising activity in the first half of 2005.

Most striking about the reports is that they show just nine of 135 legislative campaign committees accounted for more than half of the fundraising, a telling illustration of how campaign money flows to a handful of lawmakers who control the fate of the budget bill.

The nine committees that raised 56% of the contributions include the personal campaign committees of five legislative leaders – Assembly Speaker John Gard, Assembly Majority Leader Mike Huesch, Senate Majority Leader Dale Schultz, Senate Minority Leader Judy Robson and Assembly Minority Leader Jim Kreuser – and four party committees these leaders control.

One person, one vote, no voice

Most Wisconsin legislators get most of their campaign money from people who can’t vote for them, a Democracy Campaign analysis shows.

Eighty-two legislators, or 71% of the 115 seats up for election, received more than 50% of their large

Most state legislators get most of their campaign money from people who cannot vote for them because the donors do not live in their districts.

campaign contributions from outside of their districts. Assembly Speaker John Gard raised just over \$328,800 in large individual contributions in the 2004 election cycle, and more than \$315,000 of it – or 96% – came from donors who live outside his district.

The heavy reliance on outside money creates a powerful incentive for lawmakers to listen more carefully to their cash constituents than to their own voting constituents. This leaves the citizens these legislators are elected to represent with a vote but no voice at the Capitol. The full report is available online at www.wisdc.org/pr072605.php

WDC 10th anniversary bash

A political 'party' worth supporting

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Democracy Campaign. To celebrate our first decade of pushing democracy, we're throwing ourselves a birthday party on **Monday, November 21** from 4:30 to 7 p.m. at the Edgewater Hotel along the shores of Lake Mendota in Madison.



U.S. Senator Russ Feingold will be there to help us celebrate, and musical satirist and Wisconsin Public Television regular Peter Leidy will join us, too.

We will be presenting the Mr. Smith Award – or “Smitty” for short – named for the classic Jimmy Stewart movie *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*.

And, of course, there will be refreshments and plenty of time for fellowship and conversation.

Mark your calendar for Monday, November 21 and please plan on joining us to celebrate what the Democracy Campaign has accomplished in the last 10 years and set the stage for our next decade of pushing democracy.

Senate to debate ethics reform bill

A Democracy Campaign-backed ethics reform bill will be brought to a vote in the state Senate this fall, Senate Majority Leader Dale Schultz's office announced late last month.

The legislation, Senate Bill 1, was approved by a Senate committee in mid-June, but the bill's author, Neenah Republican Mike Ellis, feared it would stay buried indefinitely in the Senate Organization Committee.

SB 1 abolishes both the state Ethics Board and Elections Board and replaces them with a more politically independent Government Accountability Board with expanded powers to prosecute criminal complaints against lawmakers.

SB 1 is one of about 50 bills the majority leader plans to schedule for debate when the Legislature reconvenes in September.

Workplace giving plan promotes change in your own backyard

The oldest social action fund in the country, Community Shares of Wisconsin, connects donors with nearly 60 local nonprofit groups building social and economic equity and a healthy environment.

Community Shares raises funds for its member agencies – including the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, which became a member agency in 2004 – through workplace giving campaigns at private sector companies. Public sector employees also can give to Community Shares and its member agencies through their Combined Campaign.

If you work for an employer that operates a workplace giving campaign including Community Shares, please help them help us by giving generously this fall. There are two ways you can support WDC through



Community Shares. You can designate your gift to the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign and we will

get 100% of your contribution. Or, you can direct your gift to Community Shares and support WDC along with the many other worthy nonprofits.

Please spread the word about this valuable way of supporting worthy causes including the work of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, and encourage employers in your community to become part of the growing network of businesses and government agencies that give their employees the opportunity to change the world in their own backyards.

For more information....

To learn more about Community Shares of Wisconsin's member agencies and workplace giving program, you can visit the organization's web site at **www.communityshares.com** or call CSW at **608-256-1066**.

Doyle raising cash at record pace

Governor Jim Doyle is sitting on a \$3.5 million campaign war chest, well over half of what he spent on his entire 2002 campaign for the state's highest office and an all-time record for any candidate for governor at this stage in the election cycle.

The previous record for overall spending in a governor's race is the \$23 million spent on the 2002 campaign. Candidates spent \$18.8 million while outside interest groups spent the rest on their own campaigns to influence the outcome of the election. With Doyle raising money at a record pace, the pricetag on the office is sure to go up in 2006.

First conviction in caucus scandal

A no-contest plea earlier this month by a onetime top aide to indicted former state Senator Brian Burke marked the first conviction in the 4-year-old probe into

misuse of state offices and taxpayer money for campaign purposes. While Tanya Bjork's conviction is the first connected to what has been dubbed the "caucus scandal," she is not the first Capitol figure recently convicted on corruption charges. Former Senator Gary George is currently serving four years in federal prison for taking part in a kickback scheme.

Stupid is as stupid does....

Reacting to a Democracy Campaign report that legislators raised \$1.36 million in campaign donations while the state budget was being shaped, the director of the Committee to Elect a Republican Senate insisted: "There are no strings that are ever attached. There is no such thing as pay to play in this Legislature."

To which the *Green Bay Press-Gazette* replied: "If that were the case, however, lobbyists would be stupid to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on budget-season campaign contributions."



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