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Make People Matter



More Than Money!

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## Election spending triples after Citizens United

Comparing total election spending in state and federal races in Wisconsin in the two election cycles before the U.S. Supreme Court's 2010 decision in *Citizens United v. FEC* to the two election cycles after the ruling, a Democracy Campaign analysis issued in mid-March showed overall spending tripled and spending by interest groups more than quadrupled.

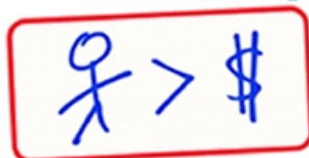
Campaign spending grew from the \$123.7 million spent in the 2006 and 2008 elections to \$391.9 million in the 2010 and 2012 election cycles. Two factors drove the sharp spending increase – the landmark Supreme Court decision that crippled campaign finance laws and paved the way for unlimited election spending by interest groups, and the state's unprecedented recall elections in 2011 and 2012 for governor, lieutenant governor and 13 state Senate seats.

But even without the \$137.5 million spent on the 2011 and 2012 recall races, candidate and interest group election spending in the 2010 and 2012 election cycles totaled \$254.4 million – still more than double what candidates and groups spent in the 2006 and 2008 election cycles. Interest groups unbridled by the *Citizens United* ruling spent \$171.3 million in the 2010 and 2012 cycles, a four-fold increase over the \$39.6 million groups spent in the 2006 and 2008 elections.

## Over 18,000 petition for statewide vote

More than 18,000 Wisconsinites have signed the enclosed petition calling for a statewide vote to put Wisconsin on record against the Supreme Court decision in the *Citizens United* case that opened the floodgates to special interest money in elections. The petition requests a statewide referendum, which must be authorized by

**MONEY OUT/**



**VOTERS IN**

legislators and the governor. If the proposed ballot initiative passes, Wisconsin would join 11 states that have already voted in favor of overturning *Citizens United* and allowing laws to limit election spending.

Through the end of March, a coalition of 26 state groups including the Democracy Campaign collected 18,070 petition signatures calling for a statewide vote. On April 2, 68% of voters in Chippewa County, 77% in Fort Atkinson and 83% in Whitewater supported overturning *Citizens United*. Earlier, voters in Eau Claire County, Dane County and West Allis also approved local referenda calling for the ruling's reversal.

## \$10 million for elections keeps wind in school voucher sails

Wealthy campaign contributors and shadowy interests groups that back programs to use public money to provide families vouchers to send their children to private or religious schools have spent nearly \$10 million in 10 years in Wisconsin to elect pro-voucher lawmakers and judges, the Democracy Campaign reported earlier this month.

Individual contributions from school choice backers totaled \$2.8 million from 2003 through mid-2012, and pro-voucher groups spent \$7 million from 2003 through 2012 on their own campaign advertising supporting candidates sympathetic to their cause.

More than half of the \$9.8 million in campaign support from groups and individuals favoring vouchers came in the first 19 months of the 2011-2012 election cycle when the governor, lieutenant governor and 13 state senators faced possible recall.

Governor Scott Walker has received \$2.35 million in campaign support from individuals and groups backing school vouchers since his first run for governor in 2006. Virtually all of that – \$2.2 million – came for his June 2012 recall race when mostly out-of-state school choice supporters contributed \$1.1 million to his campaign and the Washington-based American Federation for Children spent \$1.1 million on electioneering activities on Walker's behalf.

The large bump in support came amid the governor's efforts before and after the recall election to expand the voucher program, a push he has made despite the 23-year-old program's failure to boost student achievement and despite mismanagement problems that led to criminal charges, convictions and prison time for some voucher school administrators.



## Outside groups dominate TV spending on Supreme Court race

Television spending in this year's race for a seat on the Wisconsin Supreme Court topped \$1 million, with over two-thirds of the spending done by conservative interest groups favoring incumbent Justice Patience Roggensack.

Roggensack, who is part of the court's conservative wing, was reelected in the April 2 election. She defeated Marquette University law professor Ed Fallon, maintaining the court's 4-3 conservative majority.

Fallon was outspent by Roggensack and outside groups by a 5-to-1 margin. The business lobby group Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce spent close to \$500,000 on ads supporting Roggensack during the general election campaign, and the right-wing group Wisconsin Club for Growth spent approximately \$300,000 in pro-Roggensack ads in the primary. Roggensack spent about \$155,000 on TV ads, while Fallon's campaign spent about \$190,000.



The preliminary TV ad spending figures come from calculations by TNS Media Intelligence/CMAG, which captures satellite data in the nation's largest media markets. The calculations do not account for ad agency commissions or the cost of producing ads, nor do they reflect the cost of ads aired on local cable channels.

The Democracy Campaign is in the process of tallying overall campaign spending in the race, including a more thorough analysis of TV spending as well as other forms of campaigning such as radio and direct mail advertising. WDC will include spending in the final weeks before the April 2 election by the candidates and political committees that will be disclosed in campaign finance reports to be filed in July.

Among the other forms of spending already reported is more than \$200,000 on radio ads by the Wisconsin Realtors Association, which joined with Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce in 2009 to write amendments to the state judicial ethics code allowing judges to rule on cases involving their biggest campaign supporters. Roggensack voted to approve the changes.

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## Representatives at odds with represented on reform issues

A Wisconsin Democracy Campaign analysis of votes on nearly four dozen campaign finance, ethics and good government reform measures from the 2001-2002 legislative session through the 2011-2012 session shows legislators who currently control both the Senate and Assembly have most regularly sided with powerful special interests and voted against reform legislation the majority of the time.

At or near the top of the list of legislators who have cast the most anti-reform votes over the years are Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, Assembly Majority Leader Scott Suder and Senate Assistant Majority Leader Glenn Grothman.

“Poll after poll shows the public is repulsed by unlimited election spending unleashed by the Citizens United ruling and is convinced reform is needed. And when votes have been taken in local communities and states across the country, a tripartisan supermajority of Republican, Democratic and independent voters has condemned Citizens United and called for change,” WDC director Mike McCabe said. “The voting records of those who control the agenda at our State Capitol reveal a striking disconnect between most citizens and the lawmakers who are supposed to be representing them.”

The Democracy Campaign is part of a coalition of groups calling for the Legislature to authorize a statewide vote on the Citizens United decision and the need for reform.

The full analysis of all legislators’ voting records is available online at [www.wisd.org/pr021413.php](http://www.wisd.org/pr021413.php).

### TAKE ACTION!

Included in this edition of the *Big Money Bulletin* is a copy of WDC’s petition calling for a statewide vote on the Citizens United decision and the need to rein in the money in politics. If you have not yet signed the petition, please do so. And urge family, friends and neighbors to sign too. Then mail the petition back to the Democracy Campaign at the address on the bottom of the form. Thanks!

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## Journalism’s uncertain future and its role in informing public in the spotlight at WDC annual meeting

Highlighting the Democracy Campaign’s May 8 membership meeting will be a panel discussion involving three veteran journalists with decades of experience covering politics and government in Wisconsin.

The theme of the panel discussion will be “Who will tell the people?” and will focus on what the future holds in the news industry and how citizens are going to be informed of what’s going on in their government and society with the rapidly changing

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***WDC’s annual membership meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 8 from 4 to 6:30 p.m. at the High Noon Saloon in Madison.***

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media landscape. The discussion also will focus on where the Democracy Campaign fits into the picture and how WDC enables news organizations to do investigative journalism about money in politics.

Panelists will include *Wisconsin State Journal* reporter Dee Hall, longtime radio journalist Tim Morrissey, and veteran newspaperman Bill Lueders. Hall won awards for reporting she did in 2001 with the assistance of the Democracy Campaign that exposed illegal campaigning by state lawmakers and resulted in criminal investigations that led to several top legislative leaders being convicted of felony misconduct in public office and serving jail time. Morrissey worked for years in commercial radio, and now is a writer and producer for the nonprofit Public News Service and also writes the blog “Rifles at Dawn.” Lueders was the editor of the Madison weekly newspaper *Isthmus* and now is director of the Money and Politics Project at the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism. He also is president of the state Freedom of Information Council.

## McCabe featured in documentary

Several segments of extensive interviews with Democracy Campaign director Mike McCabe appear in “Citizen Koch,” a documentary film about the political influence of billionaire brothers Charles and David Koch that premiered in January at the Sundance Film Festival in Utah and also was screened at this month’s Wisconsin Film Festival.

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## Feingold sings WDC's praises

Former United States Senator Russ Feingold recently had this to say about the Democracy Campaign:

"I have personally witnessed the work of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign since its founding in 1995 and cannot speak more highly of the importance of their efforts to bring transparency to state government. For many years, Wisconsin's citizens and our press corps have relied on WDC's database of contributions and watchdog reporting as

led to enforcement actions that yielded some hefty fines and even criminal prosecutions resulting in convictions and jail sentences for misconduct. I have no doubt that members of both political parties are eagerly awaiting the demise of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign.... WDC is Wisconsin's front line of defense against corruption, and in today's post-*Citizens United* world, their work is more important than ever. As unlimited, undisclosed money floods our political system, citizens and journalists need the work of WDC to hold our elected officials and candidates accountable."



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