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Make People Matter



More Than Money!

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**On the Web:**  
**[www.wisdc.org](http://www.wisdc.org)**



## Push made for Citizens United referendum

At a July 24 Capitol press conference, supporters of the effort to reverse the U.S. Supreme Court’s infamous decision in the Citizens United case announced the introduction of legislation authorizing a statewide referendum on the 2010 ruling.

The Democracy Campaign is part of the 26-group coalition that has been petitioning for a statewide vote and worked for the drafting and introduction of the legislative resolution, which would put the following question on the general election ballot in November 2014:

*“The U.S. Supreme Court’s decisions in Citizens United and related cases allow unlimited spending to influence local, state, and federal elections. To allow all Americans to have an equal say in our democracy, shall Wisconsin’s congressional delegation support, and the Wisconsin legislature ratify, an amendment to the U.S. Constitution stating: 1. Only human beings — not corporations, unions, nonprofit organizations, or similar associations — are endowed with constitutional rights, and 2. Money is not speech, and therefore limiting political contributions and spending is not equivalent to restricting political speech?”*

WDC strongly supports the proposed legislation and will be working in the weeks and months to come for the resolution’s passage.

“Spending in Wisconsin elections has more than tripled since the Citizens United decision,” Democracy Campaign director Mike McCabe said. “The ruling not only has put the campaign arms race on steroids, but also has rendered our disclosure laws obsolete and led to dramatic growth in the amount of dark money making its way into our elections. Only \$1 out of every \$81 raised by outside interest groups to influence Wisconsin’s recall elections came from fully identified donors.”

Twelve Wisconsin cities and counties already are on record calling for a constitutional amendment to reverse Citizens United. If the resolution placing the question on the ballot statewide is approved and voters support the referendum, Wisconsin would join 16 other states in calling for a constitutional amendment overturning the 2010 ruling.

**MONEY OUT /**



**VOTERS IN**

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## Walker raises \$3.5M in first half of 2013; GOP legislators sitting on 3 times more cash than Democrats

Republican Governor Scott Walker raised \$3.52 million in individual and political action committee contributions in the first six months of the year, a state record for fundraising in a non-election year.

Most of the money Walker raised during the latest reporting period came from outside Wisconsin. During the first half of 2013, the governor got \$1.96 million, or 58%, of his individual contributions from out of state and \$1.41 million, or 42%, from Wisconsin residents.

Republicans who control the Legislature raised \$1 million in the first half of the year, which was two and a half times as much as Democratic legislators took in. Republican lawmakers had more than \$2.5 million in their campaign accounts at the end of the reporting period, three times as much as Democrats.

## Election spending in low-turnout spring races tops \$3 million

This year's Wisconsin Supreme Court and state school superintendent races cost nearly \$3.3 million and more than half of it was spent by outside interest groups on negative advertising and mailings to effectively hijack the elections, the Democracy Campaign found.

Fifteen groups representing business, labor, real estate, conservative ideological and agriculture interests spent nearly \$1.8 million on reported independent expenditures and unreported issue ad activity in the races. The candidates for Supreme Court and state school superintendent spent \$1.51 million.

In the Supreme Court contest, incumbent Justice Pat Roggensack and interest groups supporting her spent \$1.74 million – more than three times the \$487,928 spent by her opponent, Marquette Law School professor Ed Fallon, and interest groups that supported him. In the school superintendent race, incumbent state school superintendent Tony Evers and outside groups supporting Evers reported spending \$842,186 – more than four times the \$202,623 spent by Evers' opponent, Republican state legislator Don Pridemore, and groups that supported him.

## Business leaders see political giving as 'pay to play'

It appears even those who are in the best position to buy elections are coming to believe it's wrong for our elected officials to be bought. In a new poll, top U.S. business executives say major political contributors such as themselves wield too much political influence.

The nationwide survey of 302 corporate officials was conducted from May 29 to June 3 by the Republican polling firm American Viewpoint and the Democratic agency Hart Research. It showed that 75%

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## *Nine out of 10 business leaders surveyed think election spending by individuals, corporations and interest groups should be limited.*

of company leaders regard political giving as “pay-to-play.” Even more said they would like campaign finance laws vastly improved or completely rewritten.

Almost 90% said they favor limiting how much money individuals, corporations and outside groups can spend on elections. The poll also found strong support for a U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission rule requiring all publicly traded companies to disclose all of their political spending to shareholders.

## 12th time for Fighting Bob Fest

The 12th annual festival commemorating the life and progressive vision of Wisconsin political legend “Fighting Bob” La Follette will be held at the Alliant Center in Madison on Saturday, September 7.

Democracy Campaign director Mike McCabe will again be a featured speaker and WDC will have an informational booth at the event.

Anyone willing to volunteer to help with outreach at Fighting Bob Fest should contact WDC advocacy

director Beverly Speer by calling 608-255-4260 (or toll-free at 888-455-4260) or emailing Beverly at [speer@wisdc.org](mailto:speer@wisdc.org).



## Now it gets tougher . . .

As you know, the Democracy Campaign was informed over the holidays that we were losing funding we had been receiving for 16 years from the Joyce Foundation that amounted to more than half of our income.

We immediately started tightening our belts and saving on expenses wherever we could. We had a budget for this past year of \$430,600 and were able to reduce our costs by more than \$53,000. We just finished our fiscal year a few weeks ago, and our expenses for the year ended up a shade under \$377,000.

We were able to do that without laying off any staff. And we kept following the money in Wisconsin politics, adding more than 32,000 new records of campaign donations to our searchable online database. We continued speaking truth to power too, getting under the skin of Republicans and Democrats alike.

While we were keeping our shoulders to the wheel, an amazing thing happened. As word of our financial challenges spread, people from every corner of the state came to our aid. We were overwhelmed by the outpouring of support from across Wisconsin. As we closed the books on the fiscal year that ended June 30, financial support from individuals was **up more than 60%** over last year.

To all who responded to our urgent pleas for help, THANK YOU! Amazingly, because of you, the Democracy Campaign is operating in the black.

Now the more challenging news.... It gets a lot harder going forward.

When the news came that the Joyce Foundation's support of the Democracy Campaign was ending, we received one final \$100,000 grant at the end of last year. In the coming year, we will have to make do without those funds.

That's why we need you to help us get off on the right foot in this new fiscal year. **Please consider sending a tax-deductible gift today.**

In the next year, we will be pinching pennies even more than we have in the last six or seven months. We've shaved another \$13,000 in costs from our budget for the coming year, bringing our expenses down to \$364,000. But we are bound and determined to maintain our capacity to follow the money, tell the truth about what's happening to our democracy and our state, and light the path to a better way.

To do that, we need your help. If you can, please make a charitable donation of \$100, \$50, \$35, \$15 or whatever you can afford. And we need those who know and support our work to introduce others to the Democracy Campaign. Please tell family members, friends and neighbors about us and ask them to join.

***From all of us here at WDC***, thanks for your ongoing support. It means the world to us.

## West Bend senator renews effort to scale back donor disclosure

Assistant Senate majority leader Glenn Grothman tried unsuccessfully last session to curtail what is publicly reported about the economic interests of campaign donors. He is still trying.

Grothman is coming back with new anti-disclosure legislation that is even more extreme. Current law requires the occupation and employer of any donor giving more than \$100 to be disclosed. Grothman's bill last session would have raised that threshold to \$250. His new bill lifts it all the way to \$500 and requires disclosing the occupation of any donor giving more than \$500 but not the contributor's place of employment.

There are 862,064 contributions from individuals in the Democracy Campaign's online database. Of those donations, 825,827 or 96% are \$500 or less.

Grothman's new proposal had been state law all along, WDC's database would be 96% smaller and would show the occupation but not the employer of each of the donors who made those 36,237 contributions.

Under the proposal, candidates for state Assembly would not have to disclose any information about the economic interests of any of their contributors because the limit on donations to Assembly candidates is \$500.

The Democracy Campaign worked to block last session's anti-disclosure legislation and will seek to do the same this session. WDC favors the bipartisan Senate Bill 166 to strengthen disclosure requirements by closing the "magic words" loophole used to evade reporting.



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