



210 N. Bassett St., Suite 215 / Madison, WI 53703 / 608 255-4260 / www.wisdc.org

November 14, 2012

Governor Scott Walker  
115 East, State Capitol  
Madison WI 53702

**RE: Public support for reining in money in elections**

Dear Governor Walker,

A great many issues sharply divide people in Wisconsin and across America. One issue that is actually uniting voters across the political spectrum is money in politics.

On November 6, voters in Eau Claire county were asked the following question: “*Should the U.S. Constitution be amended to establish that regulating political contributions and spending is not equivalent to limiting freedom of speech, by stating that only human beings, not corporations, unions, or PACs, are entitled to constitutional rights?*” This measure was approved by 71% of voters.

Similar votes were held in this fall’s elections in well over 100 other communities across America as well as statewide in Colorado and Montana, and in every single place voters agreed with the people of Eau Claire. Support for reform of election financing and opposition to the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in the Citizens United case unleashing unlimited election spending won the backing of 64% of voters in Colorado and 75% of Montana voters. In 142 communities in seven different states, support for reining in money in politics topped 70% in all but seven communities and surpassed 60% in all but two.

This isn’t the first time this year voters sent an unmistakable message about their disdain for the political money game. For example, this past April a referendum calling for a constitutional amendment overturning Citizens United was passed in West Allis with the support of 70% of voters.

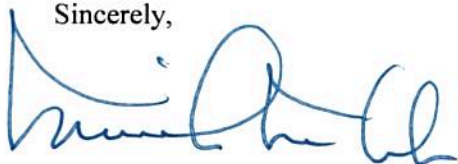
These are not the only reflections of a growing **tripartisan agreement** among voters – Democrats, Republicans and independents alike – who increasingly believe in the need to rein in money in elections. Poll after poll by academic institutions, media organizations and private survey research firms shows that a **supermajority of voters** now believe there is way too much money in politics and unlimited election fundraising and spending is corrupting our government.

- Washington Post-ABC News polling in March showed that 69% of registered voters across the country want “Super PACs” to be illegal. Independents held especially strong views on the subject, with 78% of them saying Super PACs should be outlawed.
- Survey research by the New York University School of Law in April showed that two in three Americans – including 69% of Democrats and 67% of Republicans – say they trust government less because big donors have more influence than regular voters. When asked whether “new rules that let corporations, unions and people give unlimited money to Super PACs will lead to corruption,” 74% of Republican voters and 73% of Democrats agreed that they will.

- The Aspen Institute’s “American Values Survey” in June showed that Americans are united in their belief that money and lobbyists have too much influence in politics, with **78% of Republicans** and **73% of Democrats** agreeing on this point. Eight in 10 Americans believe there is too much money spent on election campaigns, with **83% of Republicans** and **80% of Democrats** surveyed by the institute agreeing with the following statement: *“There is too much money concentrated among a small number of groups and individuals spent on political campaigns in America, and strict limits should be placed on campaign spending and contributions.”*
- In a unique interactive voter survey conducted by Emory University in July (summary attached), “political adversaries found themselves in remarkable agreement” as they listened to a message on money in politics. Close to **three-quarters of Republicans, Democrats and independents agreed** that “it’s time we replaced corporate-funded elections with fair elections (that) put elections back in the hands of ordinary Americans.” Nearly **four-fifths of each group of voters agreed** that “politicians should work for us, not their corporate sponsors.”
- Pre-election polling done in October by the national survey research firm Greenberg Quinlan Rosner in 54 battleground congressional districts represented by Republicans showed that voters overwhelmingly believe that big money corrupts politics. By **more than a two-to-one margin**, voters believe there is a corrupting quid pro quo inherent in campaign donations and that big-money donors “expect something in return.” When asked which party would do a better job of “cleaning up corruption,” 43% of voters volunteered that they believed neither party was equipped to do the job (an option not offered in the question) or refused to answer. Voters across all parties – **85% of Democrats, 70% of Republicans and 78% of independents** – said it is important for candidates to come up with a plan to reduce the amount of money in politics.

Indeed it is important for those seeking office to spell out a plan for treating the cancer that is growing in the body of our democracy. It is even more important for those holding office to act on that plan. I congratulate you on your election and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss ways to do what voters of every political stripe clearly want done.

Sincerely,



Mike McCabe  
Executive Director

(2) Attachments: Emory University survey research; Milwaukee Journal Sentinel editorials