

## It's not the size of the dog in the fight . . .

The Democracy Campaign can't buy politicians. Or even make a down payment. We have no political action committee for making campaign donations.

We can't peddle influence. We have no \$200-an-hour lobbyists working the halls of the Capitol on our behalf.

We can't buy public opinion. There's no PR firm marketing our cause and no 30-second ads to spread our message.

Yet we're winning.

In a feature story this past March, The Associated Press reported "the nonpartisan good-government group the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign has been front and center in some of the biggest political stories of the past year." The story pointed to us as the "architects of an ethics reform bill that sailed through the Legislature and was signed into law by (Governor Jim) Doyle."

## . . . it's the size of the fight in the dog.

We've been pushing for democracy since 1995. And we've been winning for democracy for almost as long. In 1998, we won a "Citizens Right to Know" law and then fought for four years to get the law implemented. A 1999 Democracy Campaign study played a key role in prompting a newspaper investigation and eventually a criminal probe into what became the biggest political corruption scandal in Wisconsin's history.

In 2001 we succeeded in abolishing the scandal-plagued legislative caucus offices. In 2003 we made it a felony for lawmakers to trade votes for campaign donations. In January 2006, we won a key election reform—the "paper trail" bill requiring any electronic voting equipment used in Wisconsin to produce a verifiable paper record.

And then this past January we won a landmark ethics reform victory—a new law replacing do-nothing state elections and ethics boards with a tougher, politically independent enforcement agency under the direction of a nonpartisan board with expanded enforcement powers and an unlimited budget for investigations.

And we're just getting warmed up. In May the state Senate passed three election disclosure, lobbying reform and judicial reform bills backed by WDC. And in recent weeks an ethics investigation the Democracy Campaign triggered led to the state Judicial Commission ruling that new state Supreme Court Justice Annette Ziegler engaged in judicial misconduct.

Like I said, we're winning.



Mike McCabe

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### Paydirt!

The last year was an eventful one for the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, but surely the highlight was winning a landmark ethics law that WDC had long sought. A special legislative session called by Governor Jim Doyle ended successfully with the governor signing an ethics enforcement reform bill into law February 2 that creates new tools for fighting government corruption and helps revive meaningful enforcement of ethical standards and accountability in state government.

The new law replaces the discredited state Ethics Board and Elections Board with a politically independent enforcement agency under the direction of a nonpartisan Government Accountability Board with an unlimited budget for investigations.

Both houses of the Wisconsin Legislature overwhelmingly passed the ethics reform bill on January 30, with the Assembly voting 97-2 after the Senate unanimously passed it.



When the Democracy Campaign put forward its five-step “Power to the Voter” agenda in 2004, one of the things it called for was “independent ethics and campaign finance law enforcement by restructuring the state Elections Board and Ethics Board into a single agency with expanded enforcement powers and more resources, under the direction of a politically independent board.” The People’s Legislature citizen assembly, co-sponsored by the Democracy Campaign, also went on record in favor of the reform in January 2005.

That goal was accomplished as 2007 Wisconsin Act 1.

### One down, plenty more to go . . . .

The Democracy Campaign continued to maintain and expand Wisconsin’s only searchable computer database of contributors to state campaigns, which now contains over 458,000 records of campaign donations—allowing the public to follow the money in Wisconsin politics and enabling the Democracy Campaign to produce a vast storehouse of research documenting the influence of money in Wisconsin politics. This research in turn adds leverage to advocacy efforts in support of political reform in Wisconsin.

In addition to the ethics reform victory, WDC made progress on plenty of other fronts during the past year:

- The state Senate in May passed three reform proposals supported by the Democracy Campaign including truth-in-campaigning legislation requiring full disclosure of special interest



electioneering, a lobbying reform measure that stops the revolving door between lawmaking and lobbying by requiring a one-year waiting period before state lawmakers who leave the Legislature may start working as lobbyists, and a Judicial Right to Know bill aimed at making sure all parties involved in court cases are notified of judges’ economic interests as well as rules regarding conflicts of interest and judicial recusal.

The Judicial Right to Know bill was introduced about five weeks after the Democracy Campaign filed a complaint with the Wisconsin Judicial Commission prompting an investigation into financial conflicts of interest new state Supreme Court Justice Annette Ziegler had while ruling on numerous cases as a circuit court judge. The Senate also plans to vote on the WDC-backed Impartial Justice bill establishing public financing of state Supreme Court elections. The bill won the approval of a Senate committee in May. The actions came right after more than 40 members of the People’s Legislature picketed in front of the Supreme Court chambers in a demonstration for judicial reform organized by the Democracy Campaign the first week of May.



- In response to WDC’s complaint, the state Judicial Commission investigated and found in September that Ziegler engaged in judicial misconduct and recommended she receive a reprimand. The commission filed a formal complaint with the state Supreme Court, which has the final say on disciplinary action against Ziegler. However, a three-judge Judicial Conduct Panel is reviewing the commission’s work before it goes to the Supreme Court and issued an order in late September expanding the Ziegler probe and questioning the recommended punishment.
- The Democracy Campaign continued to build the **People’s Legislature** reform movement and the corps of citizen activists who are taking the fight for state government reform to the halls of the State Capitol and to street corners and meeting halls in hometowns across Wisconsin. Achieving ethics enforcement reform in January and then winning Senate passage of three reform bills and committee approval of a fourth in May shows these efforts are paying off.
- Between 150 and 200 members of the People’s Legislature, most of them banging pots and pans, took part in the



“Storm for Reform” on the front steps of the Capitol on September 18, demanding an end to the state budget stalemate and prompt action on political reforms. After the rally, participants delivered petitions to Governor Jim Doyle’s office urging him to keep his promise and call the Legislature into special session to act on campaign finance reform.

- The Democracy Campaign played a key role in creating a new regional alliance of reform groups in the Great Lakes region called the **Midwest Democracy Network**. WDC’s director drafted a concept paper in 2006 for “an alliance of political reform advocates committed to improving democratic institutions in Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin.” The new network is up and running and WDC serves on its steering committee.

Participants include state-based groups as well as national organizations that are partnering on Midwest reform issues—sharing ideas and strategies, collaborating on projects to advance a regional democracy agenda, and meshing policy and legal expertise with energetic on-the-ground organizing,

public education and advocacy. This large-scale, comprehensive approach to political reform is unique . . . there’s nothing remotely like it anywhere else in the country.

- The Midwest Democracy Network challenged the presidential candidates in early September to let the public know where they stand on campaign finance reform and other democracy issues. The network’s questionnaire covering federal campaign finance regulations, ethics and lobbying laws, federal communications policy, voting rights and congressional redistricting was sent to the full field of candidates.
- Another Midwest Democracy Network initiative—ongoing monitoring of local television news coverage of elections and government in partnership with the University of Wisconsin’s NewsLab—is showing that TV stations in five Midwest states are virtually allergic to democracy. Since September 2006, the project has systematically monitored and evaluated local evening TV newscasts on 35 network affiliates in nine markets, including Milwaukee, Madison, Chicago, Springfield, Detroit, Lansing, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Cleveland and



The resulting Midwest News Index documents the lack of substantive coverage of elections and government. In the monitoring period covering the first quarter of 2007, stations dedicated just one minute and 35 seconds to government news during a typical 30-minute news broadcast—less than one-fifth the air time devoted to sports and weather.

- Earlier Midwest News Index findings showed that between the traditional Labor Day kickoff of the 2006 election season and October 6, stations devoted an average of only 36 seconds to election coverage during the typical 30-minute local news broadcast. In the final month leading up to the November 2006

elections, viewers saw considerably more paid political advertisements than actual news coverage—nearly four and a-half minutes of paid political ads compared with an average of one minute and 43 seconds of election news coverage.

- Acting on these findings, the Midwest Democracy Network sent a letter in June to the Federal Communications Commission and key congressional leaders calling for a new approach to federal regulation of the broadcast industry creating more precise and demanding public interest obligations for local broadcasters as part of the new regulatory framework that will govern the transition from analog to digital broadcasting.

## Spreading the word

- In the first three quarters of 2007 alone, the Democracy Campaign’s work generated more than 290 newspaper and magazine stories and over 160 radio and television stories or program appearances.
- Over the last year, Democracy Campaign staff members gave more than 60 presentations at forums, workshops and group meetings in communities including Antigo, Appleton, Baldwin, Baraboo, Burlington, Eau Claire, Elkhorn, Green Bay, Hudson, Janesville, La Crosse, Madison, Milwaukee, Oshkosh, Platteville, Richland Center, Siren, Stevens Point, Stockholm and Wausau.



## Helping WDC change our world . . .

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

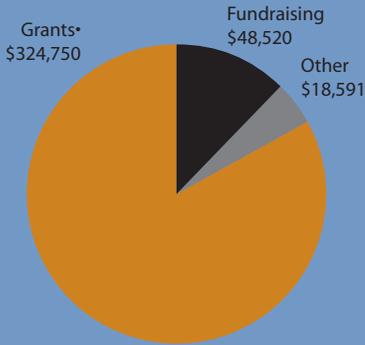
## . . . from your own backyard

Community Shares raises funds for its member agencies—including the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign—through workplace giving and other community-based fundraising. WDC became a member agency of Community Shares of Wisconsin in 2004 and this is one of the fastest growing sources of income for the Democracy Campaign. Thanks to all who donate to us in this way!



**Wisconsin Democracy Campaign  
2006-07 Fiscal Year  
Financial Report**

**Income**



\*\$93,750 of this total is grant income for 2007-08 fiscal year

**Grant Sources**

- Joyce Foundation
- Evjue Foundation

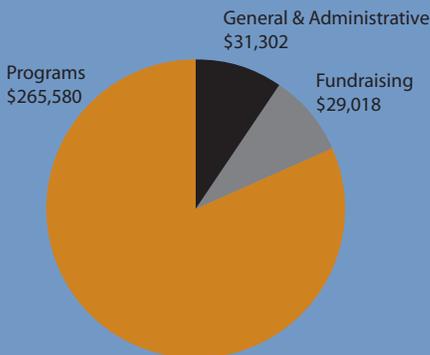
**Fundraising Sources**

- Individual, event and coalition donations

**Other Sources**

- Community Shares of Wisconsin
- Interest income
- Honorariums

**Expenses**



**Board of Directors**

- Bill Benedict
- Peter Cannon, *Secretary*
- Mark Evenson  
*AFT Wisconsin*
- Sheila Guilfoyle, *President*  
*Progressive Dane*
- Susan Lloyd, *Treasurer*  
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- Joe McClain
- Jennifer Ondrejka
- Leigh Roberts  
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- Anne Sayers, *Vice President*  
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- Judith Siers-Poisson
- Dr. Carl Silverman
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- Dawn Stucki  
*Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups*
- Rob Wilkinson  
AARP

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- David S. Julseth  
*Data Analyst*
- Peggy Kleinhans  
*Financial Manager*
- Mike McCabe  
*Executive Director*
- Beverly Speer  
*Advocacy Director*

**WDC Coalition Organizations**

- AARP
- AFT-Wisconsin
- Alliance for Animals
- American Association of University Women - WI
- Associated Students of Madison
- Burlington Area Progressives
- Church Women United in Wisconsin
- Citizens for a Scenic Wisconsin
- Citizens' Utility Board
- Clean Water Action Council
- Clean Wisconsin
- Coalition for Wisconsin Health
- Coalition of Independent Living Centers
- Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups
- Common Cause in Wisconsin
- Disability Rights Wisconsin
- Door County Environmental Council
- John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club
- League of Women Voters of Wisconsin
- Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin
- Madison Teachers Inc.
- Midwest Environmental Advocates
- National Farmers' Organization - Wisconsin
- Peace Action Wisconsin
- Progressive Dane
- River Alliance of Wisconsin
- Social Concerns Commission - WI Conference
- United Church of Christ
- 1,000 Friends of Wisconsin
- United Council of UW Students
- Waukesha Area Citizens for Campaign Finance Reform
- Wisconsin Audubon Council
- Wisconsin Community Action Program Association (WISCAP)
- Wisconsin Council on Children and Families
- Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives
- Wisconsin Homecare Organization
- Wisconsin Interfaith Climate and Energy Campaign
- Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters
- Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice
- Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group
- Wisconsin Retired Educators' Association

## Leave a Legacy of Healthy Democracy Planned Giving to the Democracy Campaign

A way to keep government clean, accountable and democratic for generations to come

Please consider including the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign in your estate and major giving plans. When you include WDC in your will, you leave an ongoing legacy of clean, ethical and accountable government in Wisconsin.

For more information call the Democracy Campaign at 608-255-4260 or toll-free at 1-888-455-4260 and ask for Debby.



### 2006-2007 Annual Report

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