



Big Money Bulletin

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Author and reform activist Lawrence Lessig to headline WDC annual meeting on May 2

Harvard University professor and campaign finance reform crusader Lawrence Lessig will be the keynote speaker for the Democracy Campaign's annual membership meeting to be held on **Friday, May 2**.

Lessig is the author of *Republic, Lost: How Money Corrupts Congress — And a Plan to Stop It* and founder of the national group Rootstrikers. He is the driving force behind the New Hampshire Rebellion that started with a 185-mile walk across the state and now is working to make sure that every federal candidate in the 2016 primaries is asked one question: "How are YOU going to end the system of corruption in Washington, D.C.?"

Lessig also is well known for his dynamic TED talks. TED stands for Technology, Entertainment and Design and is a nonprofit devoted to spreading ideas, usually in the form of short, powerful talks of 18 minutes or less. Started in 1984, the group's mission is promoted through conferences and videos in more than 100 languages that cover topics from science to business to global issues.



This year's WDC membership meeting is being held at Madison's Barrymore Theatre, located at 2090 Atwood Avenue on the city's near east side. Registration will begin at 5:30 p.m., with the evening's program starting at 6. Professor Lessig's presentation is scheduled to begin at 6:30. Appetizers and a cash bar will be provided.

WDC asks those planning to attend to RSVP by Monday, April 28 by calling 608-255-4260 or emailing speer@wisdc.org.

Tax-deductible gifts to help the Democracy Campaign cover the cost of bringing Professor Lessig to Wisconsin are welcomed. You can either use the enclosed reply card and return envelope or donate online using our secure site at www.wisdc.org/donate.

Supreme Court drops another bomb on American democracy

One day after April Fool's Day, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its decision in *McCutcheon v. FEC* striking down a key federal limit on campaign contributions.

The ruling does away with the \$123,200 limit on total contributions individuals can make to federal candidates, political action committees and party committees in an election cycle. A total of 1,219 donors nationally — 0.000003% of the U.S. population — reached the limit in the 2012 elections, including wealthy Alabama businessman Shaun McCutcheon (pictured above with Governor Scott Walker) who mounted the legal challenge.

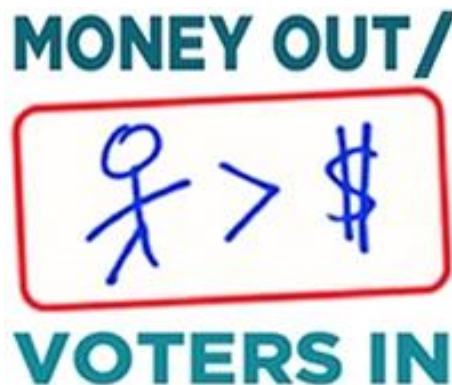


In 2010 the Supreme Court unleashed unlimited election spending by corporations and other interest groups with its decision in *Citizens United v. FEC*. That ruling focused on election advertising sponsored by the groups themselves. The latest ruling enables wealthy interests to funnel substantially more money directly to candidates and party support committees. It also puts in jeopardy similar campaign contribution limits in a number of states including Wisconsin, which has an annual overall limit of \$10,000 on contributions to candidates and political committees at the state and local level.



Voters in 13 communities say 'yes' to limiting money in politics

The same week that the U.S. Supreme Court further empowered wealthy political donors by removing the overall limit on federal campaign contribution, voters in 13 Wisconsin communities were asked if they support amending the Constitution to limit money in politics and reverse the effects of the infamous Citizens United ruling and other related decisions. Voters sent a resounding message that there is too much money in politics and amending the Constitution is needed to rein it in.



The vote margins in every one of the communities were lopsided as voters answered "yes" to the local referendum questions.

Percentage of Yes Votes — April 1 Elections

Belleville	85%
DeForest	70%
Delavan	76%
Edgerton	87%
Elkhorn	69%
Lake Mills	73%
Shorewood	76%
Waterloo	61%
Waukesha	69%
Waunakee	79%
Wauwatosa	64%
Whitefish Bay	65%
Windsor	71%

The 13 communities joined 28 others that previously approved local resolutions or referendums calling for a constitutional amendment clarifying that money is not speech and that only human beings — not corporations, unions, limited liability companies, nonprofit organizations, or similar associations — are entitled to constitutional rights.

Well over 500 communities throughout the nation and 16 states also have taken the same actions and are on record in favor of amending the Constitution to effectively overturn court rulings like *Citizens United* and *McCutcheon*.

WDC to get new director

A changing of the guard is coming to the Democracy Campaign as Mike McCabe is stepping aside as executive director at the end of 2014.

Mike has been involved with the Democracy Campaign since its founding in 1995, serving on the board of directors for several years before joining the staff in 1999. He became the group's second executive director in 2000.

"At the end of this year the Democracy Campaign will be turning 20 and I will have been director for 15 years. The last thing I want is for WDC to grow stale. Organizations can benefit from an infusion of new thinking and new energy from time to time. I think that time has come for the Democracy Campaign," McCabe said in an April 3 announcement posted on WDC's website. "I have



poured my heart and soul into the Democracy Campaign and love this organization dearly. But I am ready for a new professional adventure. I did not want to depart in an abrupt way that caused organizational turmoil. My decision to stay as director through the rest of 2014 will give the board ample time to

do a thorough needs assessment, a deliberate and orderly search for my replacement, and provide for a smooth transition with some overlap between the outgoing and incoming directors."

WDC board president Brynne McBride said, "As the inspirational leader of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign for nearly two decades, Mike has guided WDC through both successful and challenging times as a strong, passionate voice for open and honest government. Our members and board of directors wish Mike happiness, laughter, a dress code that allows blue jeans, and invigorating travels on his new professional journey. We value and applaud Mike's willingness to stay connected to WDC in a new, ex-officio capacity. The strong support from our board, members and coalition partners will ensure that WDC remains a leading voice that inspires current and future generations to hold political power accountable and push democracy in Wisconsin."

Voters take two on the chin

Before wrapping up its business for the year and adjourning in late March, both houses of the state Legislature approved a bill restricting early voting and another giving lobbyists seven extra weeks to make campaign contributions from their personal funds.

Governor Scott Walker signed both bills into law several days later. Senate Bill 324, which became Wisconsin Act 146 with Walker's signature, prohibits weekend voting and limits the number of hours for in-person absentee voting during weekdays leading up to an election. Senate Bill 655, now Wisconsin Act 153, makes numerous changes to state laws dealing with lobbying and reporting of campaign finances. State law previously allowed lobbyists to make donations to candidates for state office from June 1 of an election year through the date of the general election. Act 153 pushes the date when lobbyists can start contributing to campaigns

Governor Walker signed bills into law giving voters less time to cast ballots and lobbyists more time to pass checks to state lawmakers.

up to April 15. In some past years, the Legislature has still been in session on April 15 of an election year, meaning lobbyists would be permitted to make campaign contributions while lawmakers were deciding the fate of issues affecting the lobbyists' clients. The Democracy Campaign opposed both bills.

WDC was successful in blocking legislation (Assembly Bill 225) doubling Wisconsin's limits on campaign contributions and a measure (Senate Bill 282 and its companion Assembly Bill 378) dramatically curtailing disclosure of the financial interests of political donors. AB 225 was passed by the Assembly and appeared on its way to passage in the Senate, but advocacy efforts succeeded in undercutting support among senators and the bill was not brought to a vote before the Senate wrapped up its business for the session and adjourned.

SB 282 and AB 378 received hearings, but stalled after WDC's testimony showed that the legislation would result in a 96% reduction in the number of contributions subject to required disclosure of the donor's occupation and employer.

Governors make pilgrimage to Vegas to woo gambling tycoon

Three current Republican governors — Wisconsin's Scott Walker, embattled New Jersey chief executive Chris Christie and Ohio's John Kasich — as well as former Florida Governor Jeb Bush made a special trip to Las Vegas in late March to court billionaire casino owner and major GOP donor Sheldon Adelson, who could give their presidential aspirations a major boost.



The governors met one-on-one with the 80-year-old Adelson and also addressed a conference of the Republican Jewish Coalition, an advocacy group that counts him as a board member and benefactor. More than

400 of the coalition's top donors and the politicians seeking their support gathered at Adelson's Las Vegas Sands complex. Adelson is the 10th richest person in the world, with \$36.9 billion in net worth as the owner of the world's largest casino company.

Adelson made a \$250,000 donation to Governor Walker in March 2012 to help Walker survive an effort to recall him from office. Adelson also was the biggest spender in the 2012 presidential election. He and his wife Miriam poured \$93 million into that race. The couple first helped former U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich, and then shifted their giving to former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney after he secured the Republican nomination. So far in the 2014 elections, Adelson and his wife have given about \$181,000 to GOP candidates and party committees.

Adelson vows to be more demanding of 2016 White House hopefuls who seek his backing. His top political advisor said, "the bar for support is going to be much higher."



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