

Big Money Bulletin

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Banning Gerrymandering Is Hot!

Dear Friend,

I'm happy to report that the movement to ban gerrymandering, to which we've dedicated ourselves, keeps gaining speed.

One illustration of that fact is the executive order that Gov. Tony Evers signed on Jan. 27 to create an independent, nonpartisan commission to draw what he calls "the people's map." Along with other advocates and activists, I was at the press conference in his office when he signed the order, and he deserves our praise for that.

Another illustration is the fact that legislation to give Wisconsin the Iowa Model of redistricting now has five Republican co-sponsors, which is four more than ever before. The five Republicans, who also deserve our praise, are: Reps. Joel Kitchens, Jeff Mursau, Todd Novak, Loren Oldenburg, and Travis Tranel. The companion bills are Assembly Bill 303 and Senate Bill 288.

Then in January, Rep. Dianne Hesselbein and Sen. Jeff Smith introduced a related proposal (SJR87), this one calling for a constitutional amendment to ban gerrymandering, which the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign also supports.

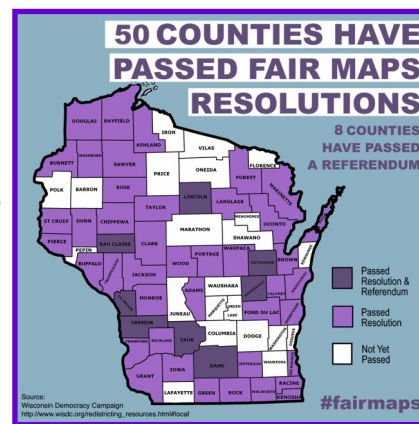
But most of all, you can feel the momentum at the grassroots. Already, 50 county boards have passed resolutions calling on the Legislature to ban gerrymandering, and voters in 8 counties have passed referendums with the same call for legislative action.

On April 7, 9 more counties are holding Fair Maps referendums: Marquette, Milwaukee, Monroe, Pierce, Portage, Rock, St. Croix, Trempealeau, and Wood. And 14 municipalities up north are holding them, as well: Arbor Vitae, Boulder Junction, Crescent, Eagle River, Hazelhurst, Lac du Flambeau, Lake Tomahawk, Pelican, Phelps, Pine Lake, Plum Lake, Presque Isle, Rhinelander, and Woodruff.

If you're in any of these places, please vote yes on these referendums in favor of independent, nonpartisan redistricting.

On this issue, the people will not be denied.

Matt



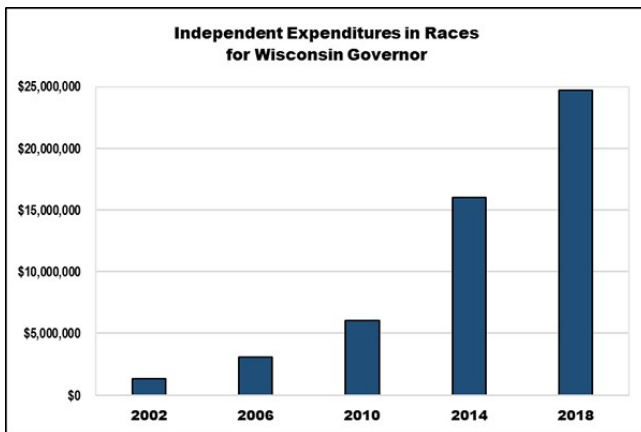
Citizens United x 10: The Report

For the 10th anniversary of the horrendous *Citizens United* decision, we put out a report called “*Citizens United: A Decade of Disaster.*”

We took a look at how spending by independent expenditure groups – those that expressly tell people who to vote for or against – has gone up in the last decade. All told, it increased five-fold in the 10 years since this decision, with \$78.2 million spent in regular spring and fall elections.

One problem with this surge in outside spending is that it drowns out the voice of the average citizen, who can’t compete with the big boys.

Another problem is that it often muffles the message of the candidates themselves. For example, in the 1st Senate District race in 2018, independent expenditure groups spent \$1.5 million compared to about \$825,300 spent by incumbent Democrat Caleb Frostman and Republican challenger Andre Jacque.



Citizens United x 10: The Press Event

On Jan. 21, five Democratic legislators held a press conference in the Assembly Gallery to denounce the impact this decision has had – and to offer solutions to it.



Rep. Lisa Subeck and Sen. Dave Hansen have introduced legislation — **AJR11 and SJR9** — calling for a statewide advisory referendum to amend the U.S. Constitution to overturn *Citizens United*.

“Our democracy and far too many of our elected officials have been sold to the highest bidder,” said Rep. Subeck. “As politicians become more beholden to special interests, the interests of the people take a back seat.”

Sen. Hansen said the *Citizens United* decision has “turned our Founding Fathers’ vision on its head, and they must be spinning in their graves.” He added that there is a direct “link between *Citizens United* and the inability to pass laws that the people overwhelmingly support and that would benefit them greatly.”

Subeck and Hansen were joined by Reps. Melissa Sargent and Chris Taylor and Sen. Chris Larson.

At the press conference, Taylor and Subeck announced they’d introduced a bill (**LRB-5316**) to amend the Wisconsin Constitution to prohibit construing “political contributions made by corporations and money otherwise spent by corporations to influence elections as free speech.”

Say No to Article V

Republican state legislators are proposing a reckless way to try to amend the U.S. Constitution – and for reckless purposes.

The proposal for a convention of the states is often called an Article V proposal, after the article in the Constitution that establishes two ways for amending the Constitution. One is the usual way, where two-thirds of the House and two-thirds of the Senate approve the amendment and then three-quarters of the states ratify it. The other way is for two-thirds of the states to call for a constitutional convention and then have three-quarters of the states approve what the convention proposes. It is this latter way that goes by the Article V name these days.

This is an extremely dangerous way to try to amend the Constitution because once enough states have signed on, you’re going to wake up one day and there’s going to be a convention of the states and everything in our Constitution could be on the table – including our most cherished rights!

This current call for a convention of the states is enormously sweeping. It includes “limiting the power and jurisdiction of the federal government.” But that is what the whole Constitution is about! This means that at the convention of the states, there’s no limit whatsoever about what they can do.

The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign opposes the Article V route and this specific proposal for a convention of the states. **We urge you to contact your legislators and oppose AJR77 and SJR57.**

Special Interest Follies

WMC Wants You to Shut Up!

Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC), the giant business lobby, came out with a report in December to pressure the Legislature to limit the ability of local governments to do lobbying. The report also slams local non-binding referenda.

The report, entitled “Local (Out of) Control,” wants the Legislature to pass a law that “prohibits local governments from using taxpayer funds to hire private entities that lobby state government.”

Essentially, in a duel with local governments, WMC wants to disarm its opponents.

Not that it’s being outgunned.

In 2017-2018 legislative session, WMC was the biggest lobbyist in the state, spending \$1.4 million. The Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA), which it singles out for criticism, spent \$800,000. In the first six months of 2019, WMC spent \$414,000 on lobbying, and the WCA spent \$249,000.

A glance at the WCA’s 2019-2020 Legislative Agenda offers clues about the animosity of WMC. Items on that agenda include: “protect groundwater from contamination and overuse,” “close the dark store property assessment loophole,” and “increase funding for mass transit” — all of which WMC opposes.

WMC’s report then swerves out of its way to do a hit and run on the referenda process: “In addition to direct lobbying, local governments also attempt to influence state lawmakers via non-binding referenda and issue-based ad campaigns — all financed with local taxpayer dollars,” the report states. “This type of activity raises many questions about how taxpayer funds are used, the openness of local government, and if the local citizenry are actually being appropriately represented.”

Of course, the local citizenry can decide whether they’re being appropriately represented — in lobbying and in the referendum process — simply by voting the local officials out of office at the next available opportunity.

But that remedy isn’t good enough for WMC.

By the way, WMC does a lot more than just lobbying to get its way in the Legislature.

WMC has spent an estimated \$25.1 million since January 2010 on outside electioneering activities using independent expenditures and undisclosed phony issue ads to elect people to office who do its bidding.

ATC Spreads Its Money Around!



American Transmission Co. (ATC), which builds and owns high-voltage power lines, is among the top Wisconsin contributors to loosely regulated outside electioneering groups that spend millions to influence state and federal elections in Wisconsin and throughout the country.

ATC and its employees generated more than \$1.8 million in contributions to outside electioneering groups and individual and corporate campaign contributions to legislative fundraising committees and candidates for legislative and statewide offices between January 2010 and June 2019.

Most of ATC’s contributions to 527s, about 88 percent, went to Republican 527 groups. The 527 recipients of ATC’s contributions were:

Republican Governors Association, \$878,600

Republican State Leadership Committee, \$354,090

Democratic Governors Association, \$150,700

Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee, \$10,000.

In addition to 527 contributions, the company and its employees have made about \$437,700 in corporate and individual contributions since January 2010 to legislative fundraising committees and candidates for legislative and statewide office. The top recipients were:

Republican Assembly Campaign Committee, \$100,060

Committee to Elect a Republican Senate, \$87,700

Walker, \$53,475

State Senate Democratic Committee, \$53,175

Assembly Democratic Campaign Committee, \$35,605

Democratic Gov. Tony Evers has received \$11,970 in contributions from ATC employees.



203 South Paterson Street, Suite 100
Madison, WI 53703-3689
608 255-4260; www.wisdc.org

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Catch Matt on the Road in March!

Wednesday 4th: Montello. 6:00 PM. *Why We Need to Ban Gerrymandering.* Marquette County Extension Community Room, 480 Underwood Ave.
Sponsor: Fair Maps Mid-State.

Tuesday 10th: Milwaukee. 12:00 PM. *Democracy at Risk in Wisconsin.* Venue to be determined.
Sponsor: Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee.

Thursday 19th: Oneida/Vilas Counties. 12:00 PM. *Why We Need to Ban Gerrymandering.* Time/location TBD.
Sponsor: Wis. United to Amend.

Saturday 21st:

Mazomanie. 9:00 AM. *Democracy at Risk.*
Wisconsin Heights H.S., 10173 US Hwy 14.
Sponsor: Wisconsin Grassroots Network.

Oshkosh. 6:00 PM. *What's at Stake for Our Democracy.* La Sure Banquet Hall, 3125 S. Washburn St.
Sponsor: Winnebago County Democrats.

Tuesday 31st: Whitefish Bay. 7:00 PM. *Why We Need Nonpartisan Redistricting.* United Methodist Church, 819 E. Silver Spring Dr. Sponsor: United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay

SAVE THE DATE MARCH 3, 2020



Participate in The Big Share

This year, The Big Share, the online collaborative fundraiser hosted by Community Shares of Wisconsin for its member organizations (we're one of them!) is on Tuesday, March 3.

Please support the work of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign during The Big Share:

<https://www.thebigshare.org/organizations/wisconsin-democracy-campaign>

Subscribe to our weekly e-alert to receive updates on this day of giving!

<https://www.wisdc.org/subscribe>



**Celebrate the
Wisconsin Democracy Campaign's
25th Anniversary!**

**Wednesday, April 29, 2020
5:00 - 8:00PM**

Registration starts at 4:30. See reverse for program information.

**The Madison Concourse Hotel
One West Dayton Street, Madison**



Keynote and special guests:

**State Senator
Dave Hansen**

**Madison Poet Laureate
Angie Trudell Vasquez**



**The cost is \$50 per person which includes dinner. There will be a cash bar.
Register no later than Tues., April 21 -- return the below completed form with payment.**

* * * * *

___ **YES, I am coming to WDC's 25th anniversary celebration on April 29th! My payment is enclosed.**

___ **SORRY, I can't make it but here's my tax-deductible gift to honor your 25th anniversary.**

Print names of each attendee: _____

Meal choices: _____ Veggie (GF) _____ Chicken (GF)

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Email: _____ **Phone:** _____

My payment to the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign for \$ _____ (\$50 per attendee) is by:

___ **Enclosed check.**

___ **Credit card** (Visa, MC, Discover): Card # _____

Name on card: _____ **Exp. Date:** ____/____ **Security Code:** _____

**Return this completed form by April 21 with payment to the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign,
203 S Paterson Street Ste 100, Madison WI 53703.**