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Make People Matter



More Than Money!

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A MEMBER OF
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'Founders never said money is speech'

A crowd estimated at between 6,500 and 7,500 attended this year's Fighting Bob Fest at the Sauk County Fairgrounds on September 11. Among the featured speakers on the main stage was Democracy Campaign director Mike McCabe, who strongly condemned the U.S. Supreme Court's January decision in *Citizens United v. FEC* allowing corporations and other interests to spend as much as they want on elections. He also led a discussion on how to fight back and undo the ruling's damage.



The full text of Mike's speech is available on WDC's website at www.wisdc.org/op091310.php. WDC director Mike McCabe addressing the crowd from the main stage at this year's Fighting Bob Fest in Baraboo.

Video of this year's speech as well as some of Mike's past Fighting Bob Fest appearances are online at www.wisdc.org/FightingBobFest.php.



Mike McCabe makes a point at a workshop on how to fight the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling allowing unlimited spending on elections by corporations and other interest groups. John Bonifaz of the national group Free Speech for People joined Mike as one of four panelists.

Wealthy donors hedge their bets

More than 300 manufacturers, builders, bankers, lawyers and other special interests each made contributions to both major-party candidates for governor – Republican Scott Walker and Democrat Tom Barrett – totaling nearly \$450,000 between July 2009 and June 2010, a Wisconsin Democracy Campaign report issued in late September showed.



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Wealthy donors are fond of claiming that they give for the same reasons ordinary citizens chip in \$25 or \$50 to the campaigns of candidates they favor, namely to support office-seekers who share their views on key issues and to advance a particular philosophy of government. But a big hole is blown in that argument by their habit of giving to candidates in the same race who have staked out very different positions on a wide variety of issues and who bear little resemblance to each other ideologically.

Topping the list of double givers was Dennis Klein of Brookfield, chairman of KBS Construction, who contributed \$14,150 to the candidates. Klein gave Barrett \$3,150 and \$6,000 on December 18, 2009 and March 3, 2010, respectively, and \$5,000 to Walker on September 3, 2009.

Despite sick economy, legislative candidates raise record sums

So much for the theory that the weak condition of the economy would put a damper on political fundraising. State legislative candidates raised a record \$1.9 million in July and August and held more than \$5.3 million in their campaign accounts going into the primary elections, according to a September 28 report by the Democracy Campaign.

The amount raised by legislative candidates in July and August was 26% more than the \$1.5 million raised during the same period in 2006 – the last comparable gubernatorial election year – and 76% more than the \$1.08 million raised at the same time in the 2002 gubernatorial election year. The previous legislative fundraising record in the two months leading up to the legislative primaries was \$1.78 million in 2008 when there were no statewide races for governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general and U.S. Senate.

On the Web

A toolbox for Wisconsin voters

With the November 2 general election fast approaching, the Democracy Campaign continues to make daily updates to wisdc.org to keep current information available so voters can follow the money in the 2010 elections in Wisconsin.

Lists of campaign contributors and profiles of candidates' campaign finances are available online at www.wisdc.org/candidate_profiles.html. Information on election spending by outside interest groups is at www.wisdc.org/interestgroups.html.

Wisconsin's premier searchable database of donors to state campaigns remains a staple of the Democracy Campaign's website. It is always a mouse click away at www.wisdc.org/database.html. And recently WDC added a fully searchable database of campaign donations from special interest political action committees (PACs). This new tool is on our site at www.wisdc.org/pac_contributions.html.

To see where candidates for state and federal office stand on important issues, voters can check out the answers to questions the Democracy Campaign helped the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin develop. Responses to the candidate survey are posted online at www.wisdc.org/pr082310.php.

WDC's Big Money Blog offers news and commentary that shine light in dark places at the State Capitol and elsewhere in Wisconsin politics. It's at blog.wisdc.org.

Big donor target of investigation

A railroad executive flagged by the Democracy Campaign in April for making what appeared to be illegal campaign donations is now the subject of a criminal investigation.

Milwaukee County prosecutors have opened a criminal probe of William Gardner, president and chief executive officer of Wisconsin & Southern Railroad Company, who has conceded using company cash to underwrite his employees' campaign donations to Milwaukee County Executive and Republican candidate for governor Scott Walker.

It is illegal in Wisconsin to give corporate money directly to political candidates.

From the Big Money Blog

The third stage of ownership

No keen powers of observation are required to see the parallels between the 19th Century Gilded Age and the times we live in. A privileged few have once again been lifted above the pain and suffering inflicted on the masses.

Instruments of social control and political manipulation are being put to daily use to establish and maintain control of our government and society, just as they were at the end of the 19th Century.

At the dawn of our nation, slavery and disenfranchisement were the control mechanisms. Only white male property owners had access to the ballot. Call it America's first stage of ownership.

Generations-long struggles eventually put an end to slavery and won voting rights for women, blacks and unpropertied men. But the ruling class had no intention of relinquishing power. They moved on to poll taxes, literacy tests, Jim Crow laws and the like. The second stage of ownership.

Then came the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The crude second-stage instruments of control were swept away. But the ruling elite's sense of entitlement to power was not extinguished. Voter suppression and segregation have been replaced by a third stage of ownership that can be summed up as the creation of an exclusive political marketplace where participation is prohibitively expensive for all but a few. The *Citizens United* decision radically expanded this market control and accelerated our plunge into the third-stage abyss.



Mike McCabe with WDC board member Pat Finder-Stone (second from left) at a September 29 event to support the Legacy Fund in the home of Bill and Rosemary Hinkfuss of Green Bay.

WDC gets helping hand from Community Shares of Wisconsin

The Democracy Campaign is a member of Community Shares of Wisconsin, the oldest social action fund in America that helps more than 60 grassroots nonprofit organizations build social justice through workplace giving programs at well over 100 private and public sector work sites.

If your workplace sponsors a Community Shares giving campaign, there are two ways to support the Democracy Campaign.

You can designate your gift to us and we will receive 100% of your contribution. No part of your gift is retained for



administrative purposes. Or you can direct your gift to Community Shares and support all member nonprofits, including the Democracy Campaign.

To learn more about Community Shares of Wisconsin's workplace giving program or to get information about starting a Community Shares program at your workplace, call **608-256-1066** or go online to **www.communityshares.com**.

Keeping democracy . . . and WDC alive and well for years to come

If the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign didn't exist, it would need to be created. The threats to our democracy are very real, and the fight for a system where people matter more than money in politics won't be won next week or next month or next year.

That's why the Democracy Campaign has created the **Keep Democracy Alive Legacy Fund**. The aim of this endowment is to assure a steady, stable source of funding for WDC's important work many years from now. The hope is that this fund will grow over time to a level that provides yearly funding for ongoing operating expenses or special projects.

You can make a donation or pledge to the Legacy Fund today. Also please consider including a bequest in your will for the Democracy Campaign's endowment, naming WDC as a beneficiary of life insurance or making a stock gift to the fund.

For more information about the Legacy Fund, contact us at **608-255-4260** or **wisdc@wisdc.org**.

Final thoughts

Of all the great speeches at this year's Fighting Bob Fest, one of the very best was never delivered. Doris "Granny D" Haddock was best known for walking across America in hopes of stirring the nation's elected leaders to pass campaign finance reform. Granny D was 89 when she started and had turned 90 by the time her coast-to-coast journey was complete, and the McCain-Feingold reform law was enacted by Congress a short time later.

Having just turned 100, Granny D was working on a speech last February that was to be given at Fighting

Bob Fest. She never finished it. Doris passed away on March 10. When Democracy Campaign director Mike McCabe left the grandstand stage after giving his speech, a longtime friend and aide of Granny D's gave him a copy of a rough draft of her speech.

Granny D's thoughts filled seven single-spaced pages, but these words in particular stood out: *"America is angry and divided and rather like a mentally-disturbed person. Many of its citizens are turning away from obvious truths and embracing angry and dangerous fantasies instead. . . . It's hard to settle arguments and put away anger when we are desperately anxious about our future and our family's future. That sort of anxiety is driving America's politics today. And where does it come from? Anger and blindness to the facts are the twin children of powerlessness – powerlessness over one's own and one's family's future."*



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