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Reform champion knocks it out of the park

Harvard University professor, author and campaign reform activist Lawrence Lessig headlined the Democracy Campaign's annual membership meeting on May 2 and certainly did not disappoint.

The author of *Republic, Lost: How Money Corrupts Congress — And a Plan to Stop It* made a captivating multimedia presentation on money in politics and described an unconventional new initiative he is spearheading called MayDay PAC, which Lessig described as a "Super PAC to end all Super PACs."

For members who were unable to attend the May 2 event, audio of Lessig's remarks and the compelling accompanying visuals have been uploaded to the Web and can be experienced at <http://vimeo.com/93838571>. The online presentation is password protected. The password to use is **wisdc**.



The meeting was held at Madison's historic Barrymore Theatre. About 250 people attended. Lessig vividly described how the "business model" of American politics — marked by perpetual campaigning and fundraising — is corrupting government. But he focused most intently



on the need to address what he called the "politics of resignation." He pointed to his organization's polling showing that 96% of Americans believe it is important to reduce the influence of money in politics, while at the same time 91% believe it is not likely that money's influence will be reduced.

In addition to Lessig's keynote speech, WDC board president Brynne McBride presided over a brief business meeting that included the election of the board of directors.

More photos from the annual meeting are on page 2.

An evening to remember



Board president Brynne McBride welcomes members and guests to WDC's May 2 annual membership meeting



Keynote speaker Lawrence Lessig



WDC advocacy director Beverly Speer collects the ballots for the board of directors election

Key campaign contribution limit falls by wayside in Wisconsin

State election authorities agreed last month to stop enforcing Wisconsin's annual \$10,000 limit on total political donations by individuals in light of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling weeks earlier in *McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission*.

A Democracy Campaign analysis showed that the loss of the limit will result in a small number of wealthy donors having a vastly greater ability to influence Wisconsin elections with their money.

If the \$10,000 overall limit had not been in effect in 2012, donors could have given at least \$6.8 million to state and local candidates, party committees and political action committees. In 2010, rich contributors could have given at least \$6.1 million to candidates and political committees without the \$10,000 aggregate limit in force.

Only 299 individuals — about five one-thousandths of 1% of the state's 2012 population — gave \$10,000 or more to state candidates in 2010 and 2012 combined. Among them were 173 who live outside Wisconsin.

The Supreme Court decision in *McCutcheon* struck down the federal aggregate limit on individual campaign contributions to candidates for federal office and national party committees and PACs. The limit was \$123,300 for the 2013-2014 election cycle.

"While judges, lawmakers and election officials are loosening limits on political donations, voters of every political stripe clearly want the opposite. The people are convinced there is way too much money in politics," WDC director Mike McCabe said.

According to a new CBS News poll...

3 out of **4** Americans think the wealthy have a better chance of influencing the election process.

71% think individual contributions to political campaigns should be limited.

76% think spending by outside groups on political advertising should be limited.

Demolition of state protections against corruption continues

May was a bad month for crime prevention in the sphere of money in politics.

On May 6, a federal judge sought to shut down a multi-county corruption investigation by taking the position that coordination of election campaign activities between candidates and supposedly independent advocacy groups should be allowed.

Ten days later, a federal appeals court struck down a Wisconsin rule aimed at shining light on dark money in state elections. The judges ruled that so long as interest groups avoid using words like “vote for,” “elect” or “oppose” in their advertisements, they should not have to publicly disclose their donors.

Wisconsin law has long said that groups engaging in activities for a political purpose have to disclose both their spending and sources of income, and must raise the money in legally permissible ways. The judges decided that “issue ads” run in the weeks leading up to an election that focus on candidates for office have no political purpose unless they use the so-called “magic words.”

On May 21 the state Government Accountability Board succumbed to pressure from legislators and lobbyists and loosened restrictions on when lobbyists can personally donate to lawmakers and pass along political donations from their clients.

The next day, a federal judge signed off on the GAB’s agreement to stop enforcing the state’s \$10,000 limit on total campaign contributions in a calendar year to settle a lawsuit brought by wealthy Racine businessman Fred Young.

WDC to benefit from Racine, Madison shows of controversial documentary ‘Citizen Koch’

The documentary film “Citizen Koch” is opening in theaters across the country this month. In Wisconsin, it is showing in Milwaukee, Madison and Racine.

The Racine group Community for Change organized a showing of the movie for **Thursday, June 12** at 6:30 p.m. at the Marcus Renaissance Cinema, with proceeds going to the Democracy Campaign. Tickets for the Racine show are available online at www.tugg.com/events/9158.

In announcing a weeklong run at Madison’s Sundance Cinemas, Academy Award-nominated directors Carl Deal and Tia Lessin informed WDC in



late May that proceeds from the 7 p.m. showing on **Sunday, June 15** will benefit the Democracy Campaign.

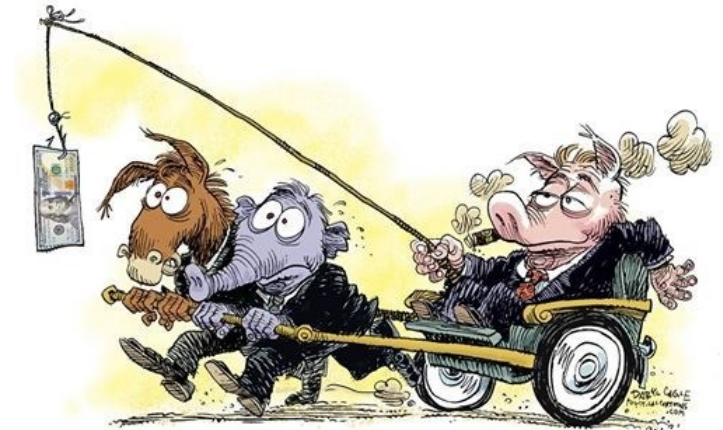
If you are not in the Racine, Madison or Milwaukee areas, you can organize a screening of the film in your community. Go to www.citizenkoch.com/pages/host-a-screening for instructions on how to do it.

WDC seeks IRS action on Koch ad campaign supporting Walker

At the invitation of the Internal Revenue Service, the Democracy Campaign sent a May 28 letter to the agency raising concerns about \$900,000 worth of election-year advertising supporting Governor Scott Walker’s policies by the Americans for Prosperity Foundation, a tax-exempt charitable organization financed by billionaire brothers Charles and David Koch. WDC’s action follows up on a 2012 complaint concerning similar advertising sponsored that year by AFPF, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that is not supposed to use any resources to participate or intervene in political campaigns.



Two Thousand Words



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