

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2019

Wisconsin  
**Democracy**  
Campaign

# DEAR FRIEND,

One of the talks I gave this year was to the Wisconsin chapter of the American Association of University Women.

My assigned topic was "Why Voting is Important -- Especially When It Doesn't Seem to Make a Difference."

Of course, I pointed out that voting is crucial: Look at how different Wisconsin would be if Scott Walker had lost the recall! But it's true that voting doesn't seem to matter sometimes because our elected officials -- especially those in the dominant party in Wisconsin -- don't appear to care what the people want.

On issue after issue, whether it's Medicaid expansion or sensible gun laws or legalizing medical marijuana, where four out of five Wisconsinites are in favor of these policy changes, the people aren't getting what they want.

And the primary reasons behind this dysfunction are gerrymandering and money in politics: the two issues that we devote most of our attention to here at the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign.

Our maps are so rigged that many elected officials feel they are in such safe districts they can willfully ignore a huge chunk of their constituents.

And many elected officials act as though their donors are their constituents -- and not the people they actually are supposed to represent.

This year, we also addressed other vital issues -- such as the need for a complete and accurate Census in Wisconsin, and the moral imperative of re-enfranchising formerly incarcerated persons.

Day in and day out, we not only raise awareness on all of these crucial issues, we also campaign hard to solve them.

In a democracy, voting should matter, every time, and in a democracy, everyone should have an equal voice.

That's the democracy we work towards every day.

On behalf of the staff of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign. I thank you for supporting our urgent work.

*Matt*

Matt Rothschild  
Executive Director



The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign is also working with the Wisconsin Counts Coalition to ensure a complete and accurate Wisconsin census. "Captain Census" from Wisconsin Voices is on the right.



*I'm proud to be giving to WDC because of the fantastic work you do in keeping a close eye on the money in politics and the struggle to keep our democracy alive and well. -- Rose Sime*

*More is now on us - and Wisconsin Democracy Campaign gives us direction and inspiration!  
-- Elaine A Swanson*



# 2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1

## WE CAMPAIGNED TO BAN GERRYMANDERING.

We provided leadership and crucial resources to the Wisconsin Fair Maps Coalition (including a handy toolkit and the state map showing the counties that have passed Fair Maps resolutions and referendums). We gave 18 public talks on the issue, and we also tabled at the Dane County Farmer's Market on several Saturdays, collecting hundreds of signatures in just three hours on petitions to ban gerrymandering.

2

## WE HELPED CRAFT A MODEL CAMPAIGN FINANCE BILL.

Working with Senator Chris Larson, we helped craft his "Campaign Integrity Package," a series of bills that would undo much of the damage that was done in the disastrous rewrite of our campaign finance law in 2015. The Larson package would ban corporate donations to political parties, impose a ceiling on individual donations to political parties, reduce the amount that individuals could give to candidates, require "dark money" groups to disclose their donors, and require campaigns to list the names of their donors' employers. [Cover photo: Senator Larson (middle) and Matt Rothschild stand with other clean government advocates from Wisconsin United to Amend and the League of Women Voters at the press conference to introduced the bills.]

3

## WE TRACKED BIG MONEY AND DARK MONEY.

Our Data Analyst, David Julseth, coded tens of thousands of donors to candidates in Wisconsin and entered that information into our invaluable database, and he also recorded the "independent expenditures" by outside groups. And our Research Director, Mike Buelow, tracked down the spending by dark money "issue advocacy" groups. They noted that there was record spending in 2018 in Wisconsin.

4

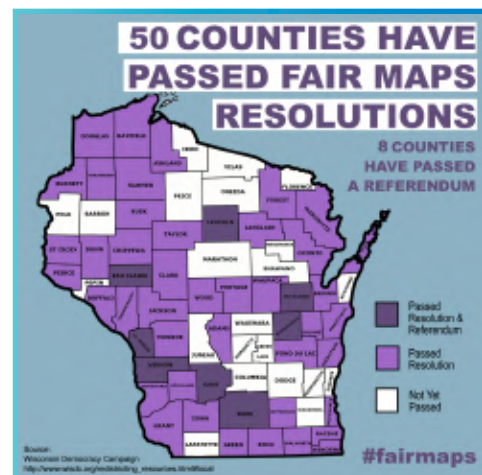
## WE PROMOTED VOTER PROTECTION.

Beverly Speer, our Outreach and Advocacy Director, worked with coalition partners to promote automatic voter registration and other voter protection policies. She and coalition partners met with Senate Minority Leader Jen Shilling's staff, the governor's staff, and the staff of the Wisconsin Elections Commission on this issue. And Matt Rothschild gave talks on the history of voter suppression.

5

## WE LINKED THE FIGHT FOR RACIAL EQUITY WITH THE FIGHT AGAINST CITIZENS UNITED.

This year, Martin Luther King Day fell on the exact same date as the anniversary of the Citizens United decision. We used this opportunity first to show that Martin Luther King was against corporate personhood, and we circulated this quotation of his: "Property is intended to serve life, and no matter how much we surround it with rights and respect, it has no personal being...It is not man." And second, we used this opportunity to show the links between the fight for campaign finance reform and the fight for racial equity.



Bill Franks, member of WDC board of directors, and Matt Rothschild speaking at a podium during a protest or rally on the anniversary of the Citizens United decision.

6

### WE FILED AN AMICUS BRIEF ON THE LAME-DUCK SESSION.

We joined the League of Women Voters case and exposed the absurdity that the Legislature somehow was in “continuous session.” Our brief noted that if that’s the case, no lobbyist could give to candidates because they’re not allowed to give while the Legislature is in session, under current law. And no candidate could accept the donations.

7

### WE FILED A COMPLAINT WITH THE WISCONSIN ETHICS COMMISSION AGAINST BRIAN HAGEDORN.

His campaign committee failed to provide information, as required by law, about the occupations of 37 percent of his contributors who gave more than \$200. Shortly after we filed our complaint, his campaign revised its report and supplied most of the missing information.

8

### WE TESTIFIED AGAINST MARCY’S LAW AND THE ARTICLE V CONVENTION PROPOSAL.

Designed ostensibly as a “victims’ rights” bill, Marcy’s Law would violate the Sixth Amendment rights of the accused to face their accuser. We were one of the few voices to testify at the State Capitol against this bill. We also testified against the Article V Convention of the States that would tie the hands of the federal government in times of economic crisis and would place all of our rights on the chopping block.

9

### WE FED THE MEDIA.

We posted dozens of original items on our website, which we shared on social media. And we promoted these items to the mainstream media, with pick-ups from the AP, the Capital Times, the Journal Sentinel, Urban Milwaukee, US News & World Report, the Wisconsin Examiner, and Wisconsin State Journal. We also appeared on several Wisconsin radio shows, including Resistance Radio, WFAW, WFDL, WPR, WOJB, and WORT. We were also interviewed by reporters from many news outlets, including Bloomberg and The New York Times.

10

### WE GAVE TALKS ALL ACROSS WISCONSIN.

In the past year, Matt gave talks in DeForest, Egg Harbor, Hartford, La Crosse, Madison, Marshfield, Mazomanie, Menomonee Falls, Menomonie, Milwaukee, Newbold, Ogema, Platteville, Racine, Shell Lake, Wausau, and Wisconsin Dells. Matt also spoke to classes at Monona High School and to an assembly at Middleton High School.



Matt Rothschild speaks to Fair Maps Town Hall attendees in Newbold as voters prepared for successful passage of the town’s Fair Maps Referendum in April.



Rothschild speak at the press event on the ninth anniversary of the



Matt Rothschild speaks with WisPIRG canvassers.



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Matthew Rothschild, **Executive Director**  
Beverly Speer, **Outreach and Advocacy Director**

## WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU!

As you can see, we're doing all we can to stand up for democracy and good government.

**Help us promote a pro-democracy agenda for Wisconsin!**

Fair maps... Automatic voter registration... Felon re-enfranchisement... Dark money disclosure... Public financing of elections... Please send us a generous tax-deductible gift so we can push this urgent pro-democracy agenda forward.

## WAYS TO DONATE

### Traditional giving

The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, a 501(c)(3) organization, accepts cash, checks, credit card donations, and bequests. Automatic monthly or quarterly donations can be made via electronic funds transfer or by credit card. Secure online donations can be made at [www.wisdc.org](http://www.wisdc.org). If you have any questions, or if you'd prefer to call in your donation, please give us a ring at (608) 255-4260.

### Workplace giving

The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign is a member of Community Shares of Wisconsin (CSW). Workplace giving with Community Shares allows businesses and its member nonprofits to work together to build fair, just and sustainable communities. We receive 100% of all designated donations through CSW's workplace giving programs.

### Digital donations

Twice a year we participate in online days of giving. The first week in March we are part of Community Shares of Wisconsin's **The Big Share**, a friendly online community platform to raise funds and visibility for 70 nonprofit organizations advancing social and environmental justice in Wisconsin. **Giving Tuesday** is a nationwide day of giving the Tuesday following Thanksgiving. This digital presence allows us to reach a new and more diversified pool of donor supporters.

**All contributions to the Democracy Campaign are fully tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.**



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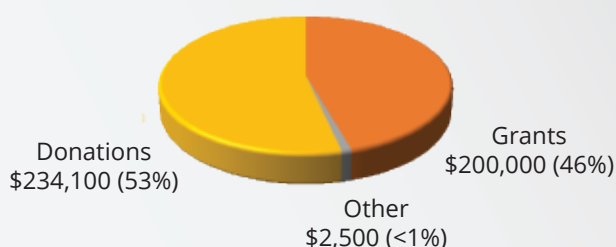


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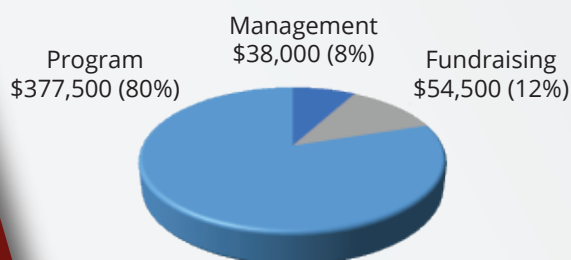
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## ANNUAL REPORT 2019

### Income - \$436,600



### Expense - \$470,000



### THANKS!

To all the individual donors, like you, who generously supported us this past year. And thanks to the following funders: the Brico Fund, the Buck Foundation, the Evjue Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, The Brookby Foundation and the Craig Newmark Philanthropic Fund.



WDC staff members, Evan Arnold and Beverly Speer, pose with Kim Wright, recent past director of the Midwest Environmental Advocates, at Community Shares of Wisconsin's The Big Share 2019 celebrations.