



**The Democracy Campaign celebrated its 15th anniversary this year.**

There wasn't much time for celebrating. In the past year we beat the state's most powerful lobbying groups and won the biggest campaign reform Wisconsin has seen in over 30 years when our Supreme Court election reform bill was signed into law. Within weeks, two lawsuits were filed in federal court challenging the Impartial Justice Act. After beating their lobbyists, they threw their lawyers at us. We found ourselves in court defending what we fought so hard to get passed at the Capitol.

Then came the *Citizens United* decision. In January the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that corporations and special interest groups can spend as much as they want on elections. And those interests took full advantage in this fall's elections. Campaign spending was off the charts as torrents of money poured into state and federal elections. Three-quarters of the groups trying to sway voters kept their donors a secret, leaving the public in the dark about who was paying for most all those campaign ads we had to endure.

The Supreme Court's ruling in *Citizens United* effectively takes the "r" out of free speech and is an assault on our democracy like none other any of us has seen in our lifetimes. The Democracy Campaign has been pushing back hard ever since the decision came down, organizing **United Citizens Against Citizens United** to mount an ongoing public protest of the ruling and push for a forceful legislative and regulatory response to this naked judicial activism.

Earlier this year we persuaded the state Government Accountability Board to approve new rules requiring disclosure of all election campaigning, only to have the state Supreme Court step in and block implementation of the rules for the 2010 elections. So the fight for that reform must be taken to court too.

In this annual report there is a timeline of accomplishments that depicts the long and winding road we've traveled over the 15 years since the Democracy Campaign was born. A great deal has been achieved thanks to you. But there's so much more that needs doing – especially with the Supreme Court giving the green light to unlimited corporate election spending.

There has never been a time the Democracy Campaign was needed more than it is right now. I hope with all my heart you agree.

Mike McCabe



# 15 Years of Pushing Democracy and Making a Difference

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## 1995

Wisconsin Democracy Campaign founded

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## 1996

**MARCH**

To kickstart reform effort WDC holds “Democracy Day” event attended by 135 people



**JUNE**

WDC launches Wisconsin’s first and only searchable database of donors to state campaigns



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## 1997

**OCTOBER**

WDC wins its first victory as state budget is signed into law with \$100,000 earmarked for electronic filing of campaign finance reports

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## 1998

**APRIL**

Citizens Right to Know law requiring electronic disclosure of campaign finances signed into law



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## 1999

**NOVEMBER**

WDC issues report showing how taxpayer-funded state offices were being used for private election campaigning

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## 2000

**JANUARY**

WDC joins national Alliance for Better Campaigns to monitor TV election coverage and push for more candidate-centered issue discussion



**APRIL**

WDC issues report showing local TV stations devote only 9 seconds a night to candidates discussing issues

**DECEMBER**

TV broadcasters respond to WDC analysis with tenfold increase in election coverage featuring candidates discussing issues

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## 2001

**MAY**

“Caucus scandal” at the State Capitol erupts as 1999 WDC report plays key role in Wisconsin State Journal investigation of illegal campaign activities in legislative caucus offices

**JUNE**

WDC and Common Cause file complaints alleging illegal electioneering by legislative leaders from both parties

**OCTOBER**

Legislative caucus offices abolished under a law sought by the Democracy Campaign

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## 2002

**MARCH**

Four-year-long battle by WDC finally ends with the implementation of the Citizens Right to Know law





#### JUNE-OCTOBER

Five top legislative leaders criminally charged for their part in the caucus scandal

## 2003

#### AUGUST

“Pay to play” ban pushed by WDC signed into law, making it a felony for public officials to trade votes and other official actions for campaign donations



## 2005

#### JANUARY

WDC-sponsored “People’s Legislature” citizen assembly draws more than 1,100 people



#### JANUARY

The Democracy Campaign files lawsuit challenging the state’s outsourcing contract with Accenture to privatize voter registration



#### OCTOBER - MARCH 2006

All five legislative leaders charged in caucus scandal convicted of criminal misconduct in public office and sentenced. One of the five later is granted a new trial.

## 2006

#### JANUARY

Governor signs into law “paper trail” bill backed by WDC requiring all electronic voting machines to produce verifiable paper record



#### MAY

150 WDC supporters picket in front of Assembly chamber in the Capitol demanding passage of ethics reform legislation. Assembly leaders refuse to allow vote, but seven months later agree to WDC’s call for special session on ethics.







## 2007

### JANUARY

Special session is convened and landmark ethics reform legislation backed by WDC is passed and signed into law by the governor

### MARCH

WDC files ethics complaint against Supreme Court candidate Annette Ziegler that triggers investigation resulting in Ziegler becoming the first member of the court to be found guilty of judicial misconduct

### DECEMBER

State of Wisconsin cancels voter registration contract with Accenture

## 2009

### FEBRUARY

Rule banning Assembly members from soliciting or accepting campaign donations during the state budget process approved



### FEBRUARY

Number of records in searchable database of campaign donors passes the half-million mark

### FEBRUARY

WDC starts its Judicial Independence Project and launches impartialjustice.org website

### FEBRUARY-JUNE

The Democracy Campaign holds over 20 forums and town hall meetings across Wisconsin on the need for judicial election reform



### DECEMBER

Biggest campaign reform in over 30 years becomes reality as Impartial Justice Act reforming Supreme Court elections is signed into law

## 2010

### FEBRUARY

WDC rallies opposition to U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Citizens United election spending case by forming United Citizens Against Citizens United, organizing protest march and petition drive

### MARCH-MAY

New campaign finance disclosure rules sought by WDC approved by state Government Accountability Board



## WDC Coalition Organizations

AARP  
ABC for Health  
AFT-Wisconsin  
Alliance for Animals  
American Association of University Women - WI  
Associated Students of Madison  
Burlington Area Progressives  
Church Women United in Wisconsin  
Church Women United of Madison  
Citizens for a Scenic Wisconsin  
Citizens' Utility Board  
Clean Water Action Council  
Clean Wisconsin  
Coalition for Wisconsin Health  
Coalition of Independent Living Centers  
Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups  
Common Cause in Wisconsin  
Disability Rights Wisconsin  
Door County Environmental Council  
John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club  
League of Women Voters of Wisconsin  
Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin  
Madison Teachers Inc.  
Madison Area Urban Ministry  
Midwest Environmental Advocates  
NASW Wisconsin  
National Farmers' Organization-Wisconsin  
Peace Action Wisconsin  
Progressive Dane  
River Alliance of Wisconsin  
Social Concerns Commission-WI  
Conference-United Church of Christ  
1,000 Friends of Wisconsin  
United Council of UW Students  
Waukesha Area Citizens for Campaign  
Finance Reform  
Wisconsin Audubon Council  
Wisconsin Community Action Program  
Association (WISCAP)  
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families  
Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives  
Wisconsin Homecare Organization  
Wisconsin Interfaith Climate and Energy Campaign  
Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters  
Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice  
Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group  
Wisconsin Retired Educators' Association

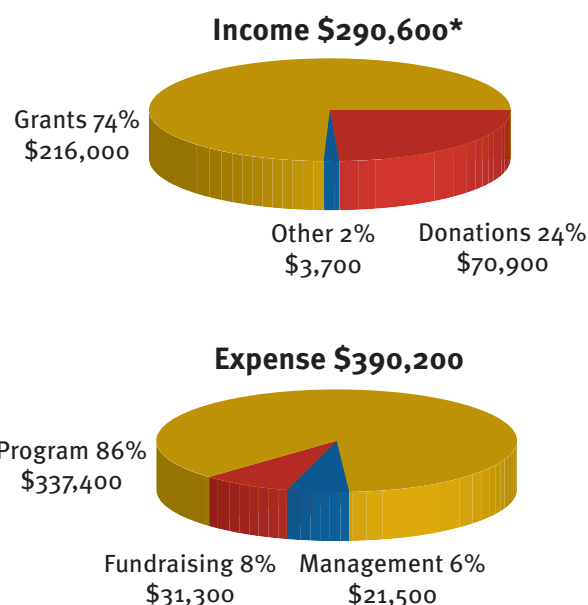
## Ways to donate

**Cash Gifts** The Democracy Campaign accepts cash, checks and credit card donations (VISA or MasterCard). Monthly or quarterly donations can be made via electronic fund transfer or by credit card. Secure online donations can be made at [www.wisdc.org](http://www.wisdc.org).

**Workplace Giving** WDC is a member of Community Shares of Wisconsin and receives donations through CSW's workplace giving programs. The Democracy Campaign receives 100% of your designation through Community Shares. If your employer does not have a workplace giving program contact CSW at 608-256-1066 to set one up or donate on their secure website at [www.communityshares.com](http://www.communityshares.com).

**Planned Giving** A bequest or estate gift can be made to the "Keep Democracy Alive" Legacy Fund at WDC. A planned gift will keep healthy democracy alive and well in Wisconsin for this and future generations.

All contributions are fully tax-deductible. For more information on making a donation to WDC please contact us at [wisdc@wisdc.org](mailto:wisdc@wisdc.org) or 608-255-4260. Thank you!



**\*In addition to the \$216,000 in grant income shown above, grant funds from the previous year were available.**

**\*Grant Sources:** Joyce Foundation, Brico Fund, Proteus Fund, Foundation to Promote Open Society and Evjue Foundation



### **WDC Board of Directors**

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## **2009-10 Annual Report**

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