

LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



Last year’s repeal of the Impartial Justice Act reforming state Supreme Court elections and demolition of the 34-year-old public financing system for other state races sent the Democracy Campaign back to the drawing board. While the assaults on a signature WDC accomplishment and a longstanding good-government program were heartbreaking, these dark clouds also came with a silver lining. They wiped the slate clean from a policy standpoint and freed the Democracy Campaign to imagine entirely new

approaches to reform and go on the offensive rather than having to defend and repair established – and sometimes outdated – systems.

We developed a small-donor empowerment plan that combines a novel approach to public financing with beefed-up disclosure requirements and strong new corporate accountability measures, and got the plan drafted for introduction in the next legislative session.



More recently, WDC joined with partner groups to launch an “End Legal Bribery” campaign. At the initiative’s heart is a new proposal to close major loopholes in Wisconsin’s ethics code, amending the conflict of interest law so officials would have to abstain from acting on matters of interest to those who provide them substantial campaign support. It also challenges Wisconsin lawmakers to amend the state’s gift ban to address political contributions and other forms of election campaign support, which are currently excluded.

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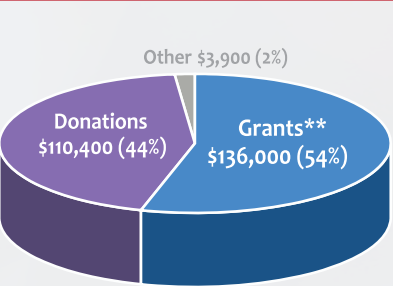
CASH DONATIONS • The Democracy Campaign accepts cash, checks and credit card donations. Monthly or quarterly donations can be made via electronic funds transfer or by credit card. Secure online donations can be made at www.wisdc.org.

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 gifts given 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.

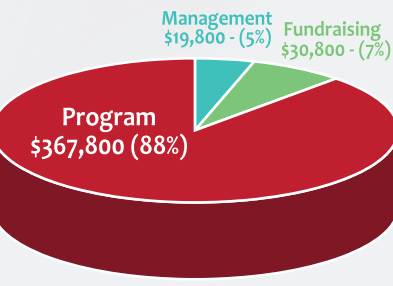
PLANNED GIVING • A bequest or estate gift can be made to the “Keep Democracy Alive” Legacy Fund at WDC. A planned gift will keep democracy alive and well in Wisconsin for this and future generations.

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

THANK YOU!



Income - \$250,300*



Expense - \$418,400

* In addition to the income above, \$470,000 carried over from the prior year is also available for current and future years.
**Grant Sources: Brico Fund, Evjue Foundation, Foundation to Promote Open Society, Joyce Foundation, Maplight, Proteus Fund and Wisconsin Voices.

2011 - 2012 ANNUAL REPORT

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2011-2012 Annual Report
WISCONSIN DEMOCRACY CAMPAIGN



ONE EVENTFUL YEAR

Recall fever continued to grip Wisconsin in the last year, and the Democracy Campaign worked overtime to expose the torrent of money that poured into the state to influence the unprecedented elections aimed at removing Governor Scott Walker and allies of his in the state senate. WDC accounted for \$81 million in total spending in the governor’s race, making that election more than twice as costly as the most expensive state election previously seen in Wisconsin.



In the 15 recall elections in 2011 and 2012, the Democracy Campaign was able to account for a total of \$137.6 million in spending, with Republicans outspending Democrats by nearly \$32 million and with Governor Walker more than tripling the old record he held for candidate fundraising and spending.

We also broke ground with new reform ideas, stood our ground against legislative and legal attacks on disclosure of the money in Wisconsin politics, struck new blows for judicial integrity, and went to court to battle voter suppression.

Our money tracking and reform advocacy did not go unnoticed. It was reported in more than 300 newspaper articles and over 200 radio and TV stories in the past year. Not only was WDC the subject of widespread state media coverage, but also attracted the attention of national news networks including ABC, CBS, CNN, Fox, NBC, MSNBC, NPR and Al-Jazeera English, as well as newspapers including the New York Times, Washington Post, USA Today, Wall Street Journal, Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times, Christian Science Monitor, Minneapolis Star Tribune, Philadelphia Inquirer and the Sacramento Bee. The Democracy Campaign was featured in stories by national news services including Bloomberg News, McClatchy and Reuters, as well as online political news sources such as Politico.com,

Slate.com, Huffington Post, The Hill and Roll Call. Magazines ranging from National Journal and New Yorker to Mother Jones and The Progressive reported on WDC findings.

In addition, our efforts led the Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council and the state chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists to name the Democracy Campaign the “Citizen Openness Advocate of the Year” for 2012.



Other highlights of a hectic year include:

- Added well over 150,000 new records of contributions to state candidates to our searchable online donor databases.
- Called attention to the rise of dark money in Wisconsin elections, as interest groups aiming to influence the 2011 and 2012 recall elections raised more than half their money – over \$49 million – from secret sources.
- Fought off legislative attempts to roll back longstanding campaign finance disclosure laws, including one bill calling for the elimination of disclosure of the financial interests of campaign donors and another that would have rolled back rules requiring disclosure of corporate election spending and prohibiting future rulemaking on the subject.
- Filed complaints with the Wisconsin Judicial Commission and state Government Accountability Board against Supreme Court Michael Gableman alleging judicial misconduct.
- Intervened in court in support of the legal challenge to Wisconsin’s new voter ID law, filing legal documents with two trial courts and later with a state appeals court arguing the law is unconstitutional and amounts to a new form of poll taxation.

WDC’s work was highlighted in 336 newspaper stories over the last year, and 243 television or radio stories mentioned our work in the same period. This is the most coverage ever. There have been more than 32 million hits to wisdc.org since the beginning of 2011. Comparatively, there were 6.4 million hits to the website in 2010, 3.2 million in 2009 and 3.1 million in 2008.

- Exposed partisan game-playing with legislative redistricting by filing an open records request aimed at forcing the Republican-drawn plans out into the open. Once the maps were made public, WDC critiqued them and developed an alternative redistricting plan. We then advocated reform of the redistricting process with a proposal to take the task of drawing new political boundaries out of the hands of legislators and entrust it to two politically independent and nonpartisan agencies.
- WDC staffers fanned out across the state, giving well over 100 presentations at forums, conferences, workshops and group meetings in communities including Appleton, Ashland, Baraboo, Belleville, Beloit, Chippewa Falls, Dodgeville, Fort Atkinson, Green Bay, Hayward, Janesville, Kaukauna, Kenosha, La Crosse, Madison, Manitowoc, Mazomanie, Milwaukee, Minocqua, Monona, Montello, Mount Horeb, Oconomowoc, Oshkosh, Platteville, Racine, Rhinelander, Richland Center, River Falls, Spooner, Stevens Point, Superior, Waukesha, Waunakee, Wausau, Whitewater, Wisconsin Dells and Wisconsin Rapids.

“No one has done more than this nonpartisan watchdog group to hold public officials accountable by demanding transparency, not only in campaign financing but in the operations of government, and no one has taken more heat for it, especially this year.” – Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council, in honoring WDC as *“Citizen Openness Advocate of the Year”* for 2012.

