

BIG MONEY OUT

"DEMOCRACY LOSES WHEN BIG MONEY WINS"

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Citizens' Report on the Need for Campaign Finance Reform in Virginia Calls for Legislative Action

In a year that will likely see record spending on Virginia state elections, the newly released report, found [here](#), provides analysis and strong recommendations demanding significant reform to the lax campaign finance system that exists in the Commonwealth. Prepared by Money Out Virginia (MOVA) and its civil advocate partners, the study has been provided to the legislative members of the "[Joint Subcommittee to Study Campaign Finance Reform](#)" whose mandate is to promote the integrity of, and public confidence in, the Commonwealth's campaign finance system. The Committee's first meeting will be held on Monday, August 23rd, at 1:00 pm. MOVA and its partners expect the recommendations in this Citizens' Report to influence legislative packages on campaign finance to be introduced in the next General Assembly in early 2022.

In announcing the publication of the report, Nancy Morgan, coordinator of the Virginia chapter of American Promise, noted that more than [75 percent of Americans](#), irrespective of party, support getting big money out of politics. And [87 percent of business owners agree](#).

Morgan added that three decades after Virginia Governor's Wilder's Commission report recommended basic campaign finance reforms,

- Virginia ranks 46 out of 50 states in the [S.W.A.M.P. Index](#)¹, a cross-state comparative analysis of transparency and accountability.
- We are one of only five states which has no limits on contributions and one of only three states with no restrictions on the personal use of campaign contributions.
- Many observers view Virginia as a "pay to play" state and legislators often complain about the time they are obliged to spend "dialing for dollars".

To support the recommendations for reform, the report documents and analyses public concerns regarding unregulated financing of political campaigns, identifies weaknesses in Virginia's current laws, and highlights campaign finance best practices from around the country. Most importantly, the report recommends a framework for comprehensive campaign finance reform in Virginia:

- Strengthen transparency and accountability by enhancing disclosure, establishing regular auditing, creating and implementing guidelines for complaints, restricting personal use of campaign funds, and establishing the requisite institutional authority, capacity, and budget and

- Promote integrity through fair play by establishing limits on campaign contributions, introducing public financing of elections, and enabling the state legislature to explicitly support the passage of an amendment to the U.S. Constitution authorizing states to regulate campaign spending.

Delegate David Bulova, committed to good governance, is the co-sponsor of the one bill which passed last year's General Assembly which established this [legislative study committee](#). He states, "*Open and accountable government starts right here at home*"

The development of this roadmap to guide the process of campaign finance reform and the work of the legislative study committee was inspired by the ending statement of the Virginia Governor Wilder's 1994 Commission Report which states, that "*Integrity in government must be nurtured and never taken for granted.*" Morgan hopes that this report provides the information and analysis needed for the Subcommittee to now start drafting bills to implement the reforms.

About the Virginia Chapter of America Promise

The Virginia chapter of American Promise (sometimes known as MoneyOutVA or MOVA) is a non-profit, cross-partisan volunteer group, that advocates for campaign finance and related ethics reform in Virginia. MOVA is also advocating to have Virginia be the 22nd state to support an amendment to the U.S Constitution which allows Congress and the states to regulate election spending. We seek these reforms to increase the legitimacy and integrity of government and to enable our politicians to better reflect the interests and will of all of the citizens of Virginia.