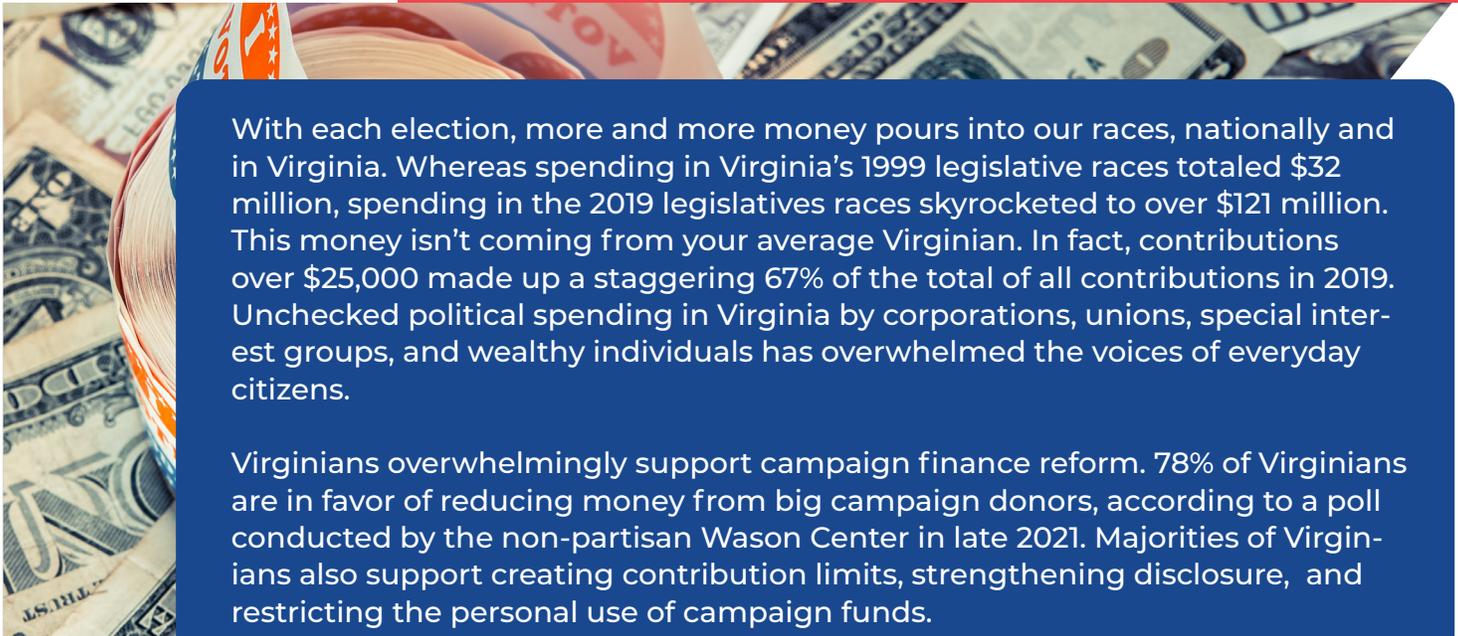


Virginia Needs Comprehensive Campaign Finance Reform



With each election, more and more money pours into our races, nationally and in Virginia. Whereas spending in Virginia's 1999 legislative races totaled \$32 million, spending in the 2019 legislative races skyrocketed to over \$121 million. This money isn't coming from your average Virginian. In fact, contributions over \$25,000 made up a staggering 67% of the total of all contributions in 2019. Unchecked political spending in Virginia by corporations, unions, special interest groups, and wealthy individuals has overwhelmed the voices of everyday citizens.

Virginians overwhelmingly support campaign finance reform. 78% of Virginians are in favor of reducing money from big campaign donors, according to a poll conducted by the non-partisan Wason Center in late 2021. Majorities of Virginians also support creating contribution limits, strengthening disclosure, and restricting the personal use of campaign funds.



Personal Use

Candidates for office in Virginia face no legal restrictions on how they spend campaign funds, unlike 47 other states and the federal government. Prohibiting the personal use of campaign funds would help ensure candidates run for office in order to represent the interests of constituents rather than to personally enrich themselves. 73% of Virginians support restricting the personal use of campaign funds.



Disclosure

There's nothing in Virginia preventing candidates and obscure donors from being vague when filing reports on contributions and expenditures, and there's no review conducted by the Board of Elections or any other regulatory agency to ensure candidates are being accurate and comprehensive. Nor are campaign finance records accessible to the public through a searchable/sortable public interface. 88% of Virginians support the public disclosure of contributions, and 86% of Virginians support requiring reporting for online donations.



Oversight

Existing campaign finance law in Virginia does little to hold candidates accountable. The Department of Elections, whose mandate includes the administration of campaign finance laws, lacks adequate funding or the regulatory authority to monitor and regulate the millions of dollars influencing our elections.



Contribution Limits

Unlike 45 other states, Virginia places no limits whatsoever on the amount that any entity — whether an individual, corporation, union, public utility, or PAC — may contribute to a candidate during an election cycle. 75% of Virginians favor establishing contribution limits.



Publicly Financed Elections

Public financing offers the opportunity for more candidates of modest means to run for office, and generally leads to a more diverse set of elected officials that mirrors the demographics of the population at-large.