



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 7, 2022

CONTACT: Nancy Morgan, nancyruthmorgan@gmail.com

Virginia Citizens Ask All Political Candidates to Pledge Support for Campaign Finance Reform

RICHMOND, VA — The VA chapter of American Promise, as part of a nationwide initiative, is asking all Virginia elected officials and candidates running for office, whether for Congress or state government, whether Republican or Democrat, to pledge support for campaign finance reform. Equal representation for all, irrespective of wealth, is our right as Virginians. Therefore, we call on all candidates to pledge to make a [pledge commitment](#) to support:

- The “[For Our Freedom](#)” constitutional amendment that allows Congress and the states to regulate election spending; and
- Comprehensive campaign finance reform in Virginia.

Since the 2010 Supreme Court *Citizens United* ruling deemed campaign donations constitutionally protected “speech,” a flood of unregulated money has been unleashed onto our elections. This has increased the influence of rich individuals, special interests, and corporations on our system of government. The recent SCOTUS ruling *Federal Election Commission v. Ted Cruz* further opened the door to unregulated money moving directly into the pockets of politicians. The new ruling reverses an anti-bribery clause (Section 304) of the Bipartisan Campaign-Finance Reform Act (commonly known as the McCain-Feingold Act). It allows self-financed candidates to reimburse any loans they make to themselves with funding obtained *after* the elections from interested donors.

It is only through a US constitutional amendment and the introduction of common sense campaign finance laws in Virginia that we can take control of rules on election spending. Why should we care about the influence of money in politics?

- **Affordable health policies-** Between 1998 and 2002, healthcare political spending on lobbying and legislators totaled nearly \$6 billion. The influence of big pharma is the reason that pharmaceuticals cost American [250 percent](#) more than 130 other countries with Americans spending double to triple to what Canadians and some Europeans pay for pharmaceuticals.
- **Climate change legislation-** Since 1990 the energy/natural resource sector has poured nearly \$1.4 billion into legislators’ pockets across the nation. In Virginia, Dominion Energy has been the largest corporate donor since 1996, moving [\\$33.3 million](#) into legislators’ campaigns. Small businesses in Virginia acknowledge the need for campaign finance reform in the context of climate change, recognizing that dark money in politics

impedes innovation in technology and the creative investments needed to adapt to climate change.

Join the over [30 Virginia candidates/elected officials](#), and the hundreds of legislators who have signed the [MoneyOut Pledge](#) nationally. As Democratic Congressman Don Beyer states “Elections and the policy decisions that follow them should be about the best ideas, not about the most money. Big money in politics makes a mockery of the democratic ideal of one person, one vote”. Republican Delegate Tim Anderson opined that “Most of the dysfunction of government comes from the undue influence of large campaign contributions. Virginia has no limits on contributions and office holders are oftentimes installed by millionaires”.

According to a [2021 Wason Center poll](#), nearly 80% of Virginians want to curtail the influence of large campaign donors while 88% want improved disclosure. Yet, in the 2022 Virginia General Assembly, only 3 out of the 24 campaign finance bills introduced made it into law.

Let’s ask our Virginia legislators to commit to respecting the voices of its citizens by signing the pledge now. To sign the pledge, click [here](#). For more information, contact Nancy Morgan (nancyruthmorgan@gmail.com)

He signed the pledge. Don Beyer, Congressman for US House of Representatives, District 8. "Elections and the policy decisions that follow them should be about the Best Ideas, not the Most Money. Big money in politics makes a mockery of the democratic ideal of one person, one vote."

He signed the pledge. Gerry Connolly, US House, 11th District. "We must reverse the horrendous Citizens United Supreme Court decision through a constitutional amendment and end the scourge of dark money in politics."

I signed the pledge. Victoria Virasingsh, Candidate for US House of Representatives, District 9. "Free and fair elections are the core values of our democracy, and the days of caving to the special interests of big corporations must come to an end. We need to root out the growing influence of big money in politics and return the power of our democracy to the American voters."

I signed the pledge. Jennifer Lewis, Candidate for House Representative, Virginia, CD 6. "We have to stop letting corporations and billionaires control our politicians and buy our elections. Now is the time to end Citizens United, reject corporate PAC donations, and get big money out of politics."

She signed the pledge. Vivian Watts, Virginia House of Delegates, District 26. "When I jumped into politics, I was advised "If you have trouble raising money, there's more wrong with you than not being able to raise money." That was before big PACs began creating and selling a candidate's image. Campaign finance reform is essential to get back to the truth of who's running... and who's funding them."

He signed the pledge. Dan Heimer, Virginia State Delegate, District 40. "It's time to end pay-to-play politics in our government, and change the current campaign finance system that allows unlimited donations from virtually any player and corrupts our democracy."

She signed the pledge. Elizabeth Guzman, State Delegate and Candidate for US Senator of Virginia. "For far too long money in politics has held back progressive legislation. Working families deserve better and should not feel that they have to write big checks so that their legislator will listen to them."

She signed the pledge. Elizabeth Bennett-Parker, Candidate for Virginia House of Delegates, District 66. "It is past time to get big money out of our politics by overturning Citizens United and enacting campaign finance reforms that put power in the hands of citizens and voters, not special interests and corporations."

She signed the pledge. Irene Shin, Candidate for Virginia House of Delegates, District 68. "A system that prioritizes special interests over the public interest is a system that is broken. We need put an end to Virginia's current pay-to-play politics and demand transparency from our elected officials. It's time to level the playing field and get to work for the people."

He signed the pledge. Nacarius Clark, Candidate for Virginia House of Delegates, District 76. "Big Money has no place in politics. I'm running for office to represent the people of my district, not corporations or special interests. Let's bring good governance to our Government so that our public policies in Virginia benefit our citizens. "You, the People.""

I signed the pledge. Delegate Tim Anderson, Virginia House of Delegates, District 83. "Most of the dysfunction of government comes from the undue influence of large campaign contributions. Virginia has no limits on donations and office holders are many times installed by millionaires. Reining in unlimited contributions to Virginia politicians is a top priority of my legislative agenda."

He signed the pledge. Sam Rasoul, State Delegate and Candidate for US Governor of Virginia. "As the first member of the General Assembly to reject special interest PAC donations, I am proud that my campaign for US Governor is 100% funded by individuals only. It's long past time we got money out of politics and put Virginians first."

The VA Chapter of American Promise is a non-partisan group that champions campaign finance reform while promoting increased public discourse between citizens of the Commonwealth and their legislators. Follow us on Twitter: @MoneyOutVA. ###