

# BIG MONEY OUT

*"DEMOCRACY LOSES WHEN BIG MONEY WINS"*

**Update on what is happening on campaign finance reform in Virginia**

**It is Time to Take Action**

**Your Voice  Makes a Difference.**

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**Links to the Campaign Finance Reform Leg. Study Committee on Sept 17th.**

**Meeting announcement: Click [here](#).**

**Sign up to speak, provide written testimony (click [here](#))**

## **Update:**

- The first meeting of the [Legislative Study Committee on Campaign Finance Reform](#) was held on August 23rd. Approximately 10 individuals testified, in person and virtually. The committee received 116 written responses. Click [here](#).
- Our #MoneyOut group was invited to share our: [Citizens Report on the Need for Campaign Finance Reform in Virginia](#) which is a comprehensive and sequenced roadmap for reform.
- Next meeting of the "CFR legislative study committee" is Sept 17th. See link [here](#). Our group will be presenting our document: [Best Practices on Campaign Finance Reform: Examples from Washington State, Minnesota, New York City, and Maryland](#). You can help by sending simple messages through written testimony, send the same message to the committee (see list below) and to your legislator.

## **ACTION ALERTS!**

**1) Let your VA legislators know that you care about campaign finance reform.** Send a short message (see pre-written messages below) and share with them our reports, indicating that there exists a road map for reform which includes best practices in other states.

- [Citizens Report on the Need for Campaign Finance Reform in Virginia](#)
- [Best Practices on Campaign Finance Reform: Examples from Washington State, Minnesota, New York City, and Maryland](#)

**2) Provide written comments/testimony at the [upcoming meeting](#) on Sept 17th. **How?**** They will likely open up comments this Monday ([click here](#)). Start out with a statement indicating that you care about the issue (select one of the pre-written messages below) and then highlight one, or all of the following recommendations:

- We need comprehensive campaign finance reform which starts with a regulatory structure which facilitates oversight of campaign finance contributions and expenditures, supported by an expanded budget to support increased staffing and IT services.
- The State Board of Elections has no regulatory oversight function. Rules need to be established which allow them to conduct investigations, issue administrative subpoenas, take action on complaints related to campaign finance violations, undertake audits, initiate civil action to enforce campaign finance laws.
- The committee should not just prioritize the elaboration and passing a bill restricting personal use of campaign finance contributions. This is low hanging fruit but not campaign finance reform.
- We need enhanced disclosure for dark money contributors, requiring complete disclosure for all contributors of more than \$100 to any in-state or out-of state political action committee.
- The committee should aim to produce a report in November which includes concrete legislation to pass and a plan of action.
- Strengthening the institutional capacity of the State Board of Elections will require additional budget which should be allocated now because this is the beginning of a biennial budget cycle.

3) **Send the same message directly to members of the [campaign finance legislative study committee](#)** (see list of members below). Tell members of the committee that Virginians want legislative-ready campaign finance bills ready to introduce in the next General Assembly. (use one of the messages below-scroll down).

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| <b>Legislative members of the “study” committee</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marcus Simon (House-D)</li> <li>• David Bulova (House-D)</li> <li>• Lamont Bagby (House-D)</li> <li>• Don Scott, Jr (House-D)</li> <li>• Kathy Byron (House-R)</li> <li>• Israel O’Quinn(House-R)</li> <li>• Creigh Deeds (Senate-D)</li> <li>• Barbara Favola (Senate-D)</li> <li>• Scott Surovell (Senate-D)</li> <li>• Thomas Norment (Senate-R)</li> </ul> | <b>Email contacts:</b><br><a href="mailto:DelMSimon@house.virginia.gov">DelMSimon@house.virginia.gov</a><br><a href="mailto:DelDBulova@house.virginia.gov">DelDBulova@house.virginia.gov</a><br><a href="mailto:DelLBagby@house.virginia.gov">DelLBagby@house.virginia.gov</a><br><a href="mailto:DelDScott@house.virginia.gov">DelDScott@house.virginia.gov</a><br><a href="mailto:DelKByron@house.virginia.gov">DelKByron@house.virginia.gov</a><br><a href="mailto:DellOQuinn@house.virginia.gov">DellOQuinn@house.virginia.gov</a><br><a href="mailto:district25@senate.virginia.gov">district25@senate.virginia.gov</a><br><a href="mailto:district31@senate.virginia.gov">district31@senate.virginia.gov</a><br><a href="mailto:district36@senate.virginia.gov">district36@senate.virginia.gov</a><br><a href="mailto:district03@senate.virginia.gov">district03@senate.virginia.gov</a> |
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**WE NEED TESTIMONY:** Just take a generic message and then add one of the technical statements above.

**KEY MESSAGES: JUST PICK A MESSAGE THAT RESONATES WITH YOU.**



- 1) Dear xxxxx, This year should be the year that common sense campaign finance bills are introduced and passed in our General Assembly. The Wilder Commission Report in 1994 recommended campaign finance limitations. We've waited 30 years for these reforms. Let's make it happen this year.
- 2) Dear xxxx, It's time for the General Assembly to listen to Virginia citizens and pass some common sense campaign finance legislation. Let's improve our systems for disclosure and monitoring and enforcement as well as introducing caps on campaign contributions like those which are enforced in 45 other states.
- 3) Dear xxxxx, Virginia is ranked 46th on the [2020 S.W.A.M.P Index](#) because of inadequate safeguards on transparency and accountability in our state Government. It's time to put in place campaign finance legislation which builds trust among voters that corporations and special interests matter less to our legislators than the voices of their constituents.
- 4) Dear xxxx, The money coming into our 2021 elections highlight the need for our Commonwealth to take action to join 45 other states to regulate election spending. The Virginia General Assembly, in the name of good governance, has the responsibility to put in place common sense campaign finance laws which protect the integrity of our political system, help legislators spend less time fund-raising, and build trust among citizens. We hope that legislative packages will be introduced and passed in the next Session.
- 5) Dear xxxxx, This should be the year of good governance in Virginia and the introduction of campaign finance legislation which improves disclosure and our lax systems of enforcement and monitoring. Limits on contributions and public financing of elections would make it easier for a new and diverse group of legislators to run for office. Let's make sure that citizens feel that their voice is heard more than those of corporations and special interests.
- 6) Dear xxxxx, It's time for common sense campaign finance legislation to be introduced into the General Assembly. 30 years ago reform was recommended by a Governor Wilder Commission which said that "integrity in government must be nurtured and never taken for granted". Best practices exist across the country and Virginia has no excuse for not moving to get big money out of politics. No more excuses, please.
- 7) Dear xxxxxx, Virginians feel disenfranchised by the large money going into our elections. Our voices are muted by big money interests channeled into legislative races, with the party system unfettered by any limits on contributions. Campaign finance reform isn't "rocket science"; legislators can easily come up with campaign finance bills developed using best practices from other states. Let's make this happen.
- 8) Dear xxxxx, A good governance platform for Virginia includes common sense campaign finance reform. Citizens of our Commonwealth have been waiting too long for our legislators to wean themselves off of big money from special interests. Let's finally, 30 years after the Gov Wilder Commission report, get some bills passed in our General Assembly which improves our system of disclosure and our lax monitoring and enforcement system. We need limitations to allow voices of regular citizens to be heard.