

## **Statement by Reform Groups on Campaign Finance Reform Package Unveiled Yesterday by Senate Democrats**

June 10, 2017

The following statement is being issued today by: Brennan Center for Justice, Common Cause, CREW, CWA, Democracy 21, Democracy Matters, Demos, Every Voice, People For the American Way, Public Citizen, Represent.Us, The Rootstrikers Project at Demand Progress, U.S PIRG and Voices for Progress.

The American people overwhelmingly want their elections to be of, by and for the people. They want everyone's voice to have a chance to be heard in Washington, D.C. They want the barriers reduced that prevent qualified people from running for and serving in public office. In short, they object to today's big money campaign finance system and the central role it plays in rigging Washington, and want a new system.

We applaud the national leadership being provided by Senators Chuck Schumer (NY), Sheldon Whitehouse (RI), Tom Udall (NM), Jeff Merkley (OR) and their Senate Democratic colleagues in taking the campaign finance reform issue to the country and in injecting the issue into the public debate that occurs during a national election.

The reform package offered by Senate Democrats yesterday contains a number of important reform proposals.

They include overturning the *Citizens United* decision; closing secret money loopholes in the disclosure laws; shutting down individual-candidate super PACs; strengthening rules prohibiting coordination between outside spending groups and candidates; creating a new campaign finance enforcement agency to replace the failed, dysfunctional FEC; requiring disclosure within 48 hours of contributions of \$1,000 or more; banning former members from lobbying Congress; and strengthening lobbying disclosure and conflict of interest rules.

The package does not include the campaign finance reform measure essential to ensuring that all Americans are participants: the creation of a public financing system for presidential and congressional elections. This system is needed to provide an alternative way for candidates to run competitive races for federal office without becoming obligated to influence-seeking funders.

Public financing has public support. A majority of Americans – 72 percent in one recent survey – support a comprehensive reform package that includes small donor, public financing. State and local efforts have been successful, conducted by both ballot measures and legislative action.

Senate Majority Leader McConnell has led efforts for many years that have blocked Senate consideration of campaign finance reform legislation. Campaign finance reform legislation also has passed over Senator McConnell's opposition.

We appreciate and support the efforts being undertaken by Senate Democrats this year to focus national attention on the need for campaign finance reform and to help set the stage for future reform fights in Congress. Beginning next year, our organizations believe that any campaign finance reform efforts in Congress must include the creation of a public financing system for presidential and congressional races.

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