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Details: Prior Session / Another Committee

(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

**WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ...
PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS**

2007-08

(session year)

Assembly

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

**Committee on ... Elections and Constitutional Law
(AC-ECL)**

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**
- Record of Comm. Proceedings ... **RCP**

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt**
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule**
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions
 - (**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
 - (**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

Miscellaneous:

Miscellaneous information included in records from a prior session or testimony submitted to another committee.





"LITTLE WHITE SCHOOLHOUSE"
Ripon, Wisconsin
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as the official birthplace*

Republican Party of Wisconsin

David Opitz, chairman
R. J. Johnson, executive director

MEMORANDUM

Date: February 14, 1997

To: All Republican Leadership and interested parties

From: Brian J. Nemoir, Political Director

RE: Democratic Money Chain

As campaign spending and finance reform continues to receive greater public discourse, the Republican Party of Wisconsin has conducted an independent investigation into the flow of money between Democratic friendly special interests and the massive amount of independent expenditures witnessed in the 1996 election cycle. Enclosed you will find a copy of the donations received by the major participants in the funding of independent expenditures, and also a flow chart of the Democratic money chain.

In 1996 the traditional Democratic allies including; legislators, labor unions, environmental PACs, WEAC, AFSCME and other miscellaneous PACs poured a record \$113,950.00 into a single receptacle, based at the Democratic National Committee Headquarters, called the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee (DLCC). The DLCC internally increased funding to \$242,000.00, transferring the entire "sweetened" contribution to a LaCrosse based PAC, called WI 2000.

WI 2000 is a membership-less organization, its only function is to provide cover for other PAC contributors by acting as a checkbook for negative independent expenditure efforts against Republican candidates. WI 2000 takes the bundled DLCC moneys, plus collected funds from many of the same Democratic friendly PACs who contributed to the DLCC, and executes various independent expenditures against sixteen Republican candidates across the state. It should be

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noted that January finance reports indicate that WI 2000 received \$242,000.00 year-to-date to from the DLCC, while DLCC has disclosed disbursing only \$167,000.00 year-to-date to WI 2000. The Elections Board has been alerted to the \$75,000.00 differential in DLCC disbursements and WI 2000 receipts.

In addition to the massive DLCC/WI 2000 collaboration, WEAC did an additional \$311,587.83 worth of independent expenditures against six different Republican candidates. WEAC also contributed \$10,000.00 to the DLCC, and an additional \$40,000.00 to WI 2000. It should be noted that WEAC contributed a portion of its independent expenditures to the re-election efforts of two Republican State Senators. WEAC continues to be the single largest contributor and participant in independent expenditures.

The other major independent expenditure effort against Republican candidates was conducted by the WI Stewardship PAC. Due to major accounting errors on its January report, it is difficult to interpret the independent expenditures of the WI Stewardship PAC, although it should be noted that the Sierra Club transferred \$15,552.00 to the WI Stewardship PAC. The WI Stewardship PAC registered to do independent expenditures against seven Republican candidates, although the actual disbursements are unreported on the January closing report, and the cash balance is zero. The accounting problems of the WI Stewardship PAC have been pointed out to the Elections Board.

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.



Republican Party of Wisconsin

David Opitz, chairman
R. J. Johnson, executive director

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REPORT OF CONTRIBUTIONS

(election-1997, per Brian J. Nemoir)

WISCONSIN 2000

TOTAL RECEIPTS: \$433,097.75
TOTAL DISB: \$425,646.73

RECEIPTS:

TEAMSTERS 39	11/1	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
IBPAT OAC	11/1	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
PLUMBERS LOCAL 75	11/1	\$2,000.00	\$6,000.00
WI CARPENTERS	10/29	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
PROF. FIREFIGHTERS	10/29	\$1,000.00	\$4,000.00
UAW JANESVILLE	10/25	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
UAW STATE-PAC	11/11	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
AT&T PAC	10/25	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
WI PIPE TRADES	10/23	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
OPERATING ENGINEERS 139	10/23	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00
PROF. FIREFIGHTERS	10/29	\$1,000.00	\$4,000.00
DLCC HARD ACCOUNT	10/31	\$40,000.00	\$242,000.00
WI PEOPLE CONFERENCE	10/25	\$24,925.00	\$29,295.00
UNITED TRANSP. UNION	10/28	\$3,000.00	\$8,000.00
WI CREDIT UNION LEAGUE	10/29	\$3,500.00	\$7,250.00
WI FED TEACHERS COPE	10/31	\$500.00	\$500.00
WI LABORERS DISTRICT	10/31	\$5,000.00	\$35,000.00
MTEA-PAC	10/31	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
GREATER MILW. DRIVE	10/31	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
UNITED STEEL	10/31	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
MTI VOTERS	11/01	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00
WEAC PAC	10/30	\$10,000.00	\$40,000.00
WI FED OF NURSES	10/30	\$500.00	\$500.00
FED OF NURSES-5001	10/30	\$500.00	\$500.00

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(contr., pg.2)

CMP. FOR RURAL ELECTRIC	10/25	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
IBEW	11/04	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
HOUSE PAC	11/18	\$1,500.00	\$4,000.00

DLCC

TOTAL RECEIPTS: \$113,950.00

TOTAL DISB: \$242,000.00

-WI 2000	10/17	\$50,000.00	\$117,000.00
-WI 2000	10/30	\$10,000.00	\$167,000.00
-WI 2000	10/30	\$40,000.00	\$167,000.00

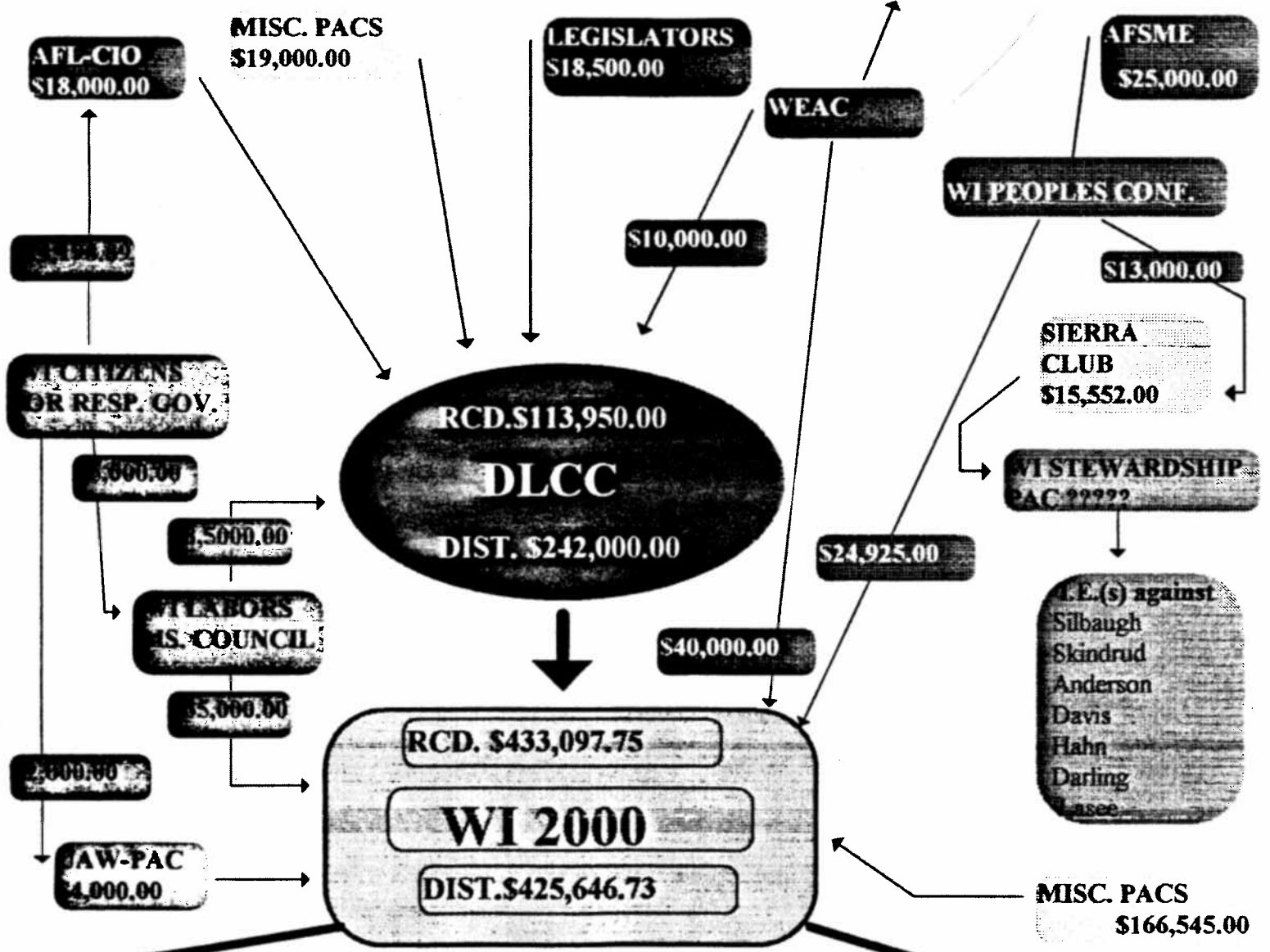
RECEIPTS:

SLUE PAC	10/30	\$1000.00	\$1,000.00
BANC ONE	10/30	\$1,500.00	\$1,000.00
WEPCO	10/30	\$1,650.00	\$1650.00
WEAC	10/30	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
WI SEIU JOINT COUNCIL	10/28	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
WI AFL-CIO	10/23	\$12,000.00	\$18,000.00
PROF. FIREFIGHTERS	10/23	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
OPERATING ENGINEERS 139	10/23	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00
KENOSHA ED PAC	10/23	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
CWUC SOUTH PAC	10/25	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
NUEPAC	10/25	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
CWUC NORTH-PAC	10/25	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
CWUC WEST-PAC	10/25	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
ROCK VALLEY TEACHERS PAC	10/24	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
PLUMBERS LOCAL 75	10/24	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
WI LABOR DISTRICT	10/31	\$2,500.00	\$8,500.00
IMPACT	10/31	\$450.00	\$450.00
WI CREDIT UNION	10/29	\$1,625.00	\$1650.00
KENOSHA ED PAC	10/29	\$500.00	\$500.00
INDIVIDUAL CAMP. COMM.			\$18,500.00

DEMOCRATIC MONEY CHAIN

prepared by: RPW—Brian J. Nemoir

I.E.(s) Against Approx Total: \$311,587.83
 Huebsch Schaefer Skindrud
 Klecker Levantetz Lasee
 I.E.(s) FOR: Rude and Cowles



ASSEMBLY I.E.(S) AGAINST:
 APPROX. TOTAL: \$153,110.61

- | | | |
|----------|----------|--------|
| Schaefer | Skindrud | Moser |
| Stone | Anderson | Davis |
| Lasee | Harsdorf | Musser |
| Sykora | Silbaugh | Bluhm |

SENATE I.E.(S) AGAINST;
 APPROX. TOTAL: \$235,574.06

- | | |
|------------|---------|
| Drzewiecki | Darling |
| Levantetz | Griggs |

(contr., pg. 3)

SIERRA CLUB

TOTAL RECEIPTS: \$18,550.00
TOTAL DISB: \$16,711.70

RECEIPTS:

WI PEOPLE CONF.	11/04	\$3,000.00	\$13,000.00
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WI STEWARDSHIP PAC

RECEIPTS:

WI SIERRA CLUB	10/31	\$9000.00	
WI SIERRA CLUB	10/31	\$1447.00	\$10,447.00

WEAC

TOTAL RECEIPTS: \$161,701.24
TOTAL DISB: \$351,587.83

-WI2000	\$40,000.00
-DLCC	\$10,000.00



COPY

News Release

For Immediate Distribution

March 5, 1998

Contact Rep. Seratti at (715) 696-3513 or (608) 266-3780

Seratti Seeks To Expose Out-of-State Money Chain

Madison...Contributions to political groups located outside the state of Wisconsin would be subject to the same campaign finance reporting requirements under a bill introduced by State Representative Lorraine M. Seratti (R-Spread Eagle).

"Huge sums of out-of-state dollars have been flooding the state and influencing elections." Seratti said. "It's time these "money chain" operations abide by the same laws as in-state contributors."

Currently, registrants under the campaign finance law are required to file regular reports. However, if a registrant doesn't maintain an office or street address within this state, they are not required to report any funds they receive from out-state, national or international groups. This bill will require they report the same information as in-state registrants.

During the 1996 campaign cycle huge sums were transferred into Wisconsin-based political groups to influence state elections. Contributions were used primarily for negative "independent expenditures" by labor unions, environmental groups, teachers' unions and national political parties.

"The public has a right to know about any dollars spent in state elections. These out-of-state groups should not be able to hide under a registrant that doesn't hold an office or street address in the state." Seratti said.

The legislation is currently being circulated for Senate and Assembly co-sponsors. Those seeking more information can contact Seratti toll-free at 1-888-534-0036 or via e-mail at Rep.Seratti@legis.state.wi.us.




Testimony of Representative Lorraine M. Seratti

ASSEMBLY BILL 416

9/1/99

Prior
Session



Under current campaign finance law, registrants are required to file regular reports with the appropriate filing officer or agency. The reports must identify contributors of more than \$20 cumulatively within a calendar year, as well as any other sources of income providing \$20 or more. For contributors giving \$100 or more they must report their occupation and principal place of employment if any exists. The report must list from whom and to whom funds are transferred including any loans exceeding \$20 together with the identity of the lenders and guarantors. It must include any disbursements or obligations exceeding \$20, and finally must include certain information from registrants making disbursements independently of the candidate.

However, if a registrant does not maintain an address within this state, the registrant need only identify contributions, transfers, loans and other income received from sources in this state, and disbursements and obligations incurred with respect to elections for state or local office in this state.

Assembly Bill 416 deletes the exception for registrants who or which do not maintain an office or street address within this state, so that these registrants are required to report the same information as other registrants.

This change is needed in order to provide greater accountability for the people of Wisconsin. If individuals or special interest groups from outside our state wish to be involved in political races in Wisconsin, we have a right

to know who they are, where their contributions come from, and in what amounts.

Under current law, the original source of the money flowing into state races from out of state is often unclear. Special interest groups from out of state can pour large sums of money into targeted races in order to further their own interests, without the public knowing.

Nationally, we have seen foreign interests contributing money to the election of our highest offices. It does a disservice to the voting public to allow the source of funding for political races to remain, for all intents and purposes, anonymous. The paperwork contributors would have to go through to contribute to campaigns is worth the price of participating in Wisconsin elections.

I would be happy to answer any questions.

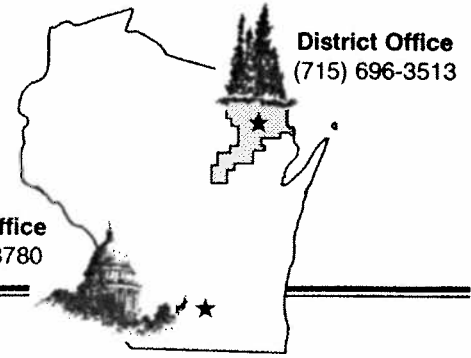


**LORRAINE M.
SERATTI**

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
36TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

P.O. Box 8953, State Capitol • Madison, Wisconsin 53708-8953
Toll-Free: (888) 534-0036 • Fax: (608) 282-3636 • Rep.Seratti@legis.state.wi.us

Madison Office
(608) 266-3780



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Rep. Seratti at 608-266-3780 or 1-888-534-0036

September 3, 1999

Seratti Moves Campaign Finance Reform Forward

(MADISON) Campaign finance reporting reform moved one step forward last week when a bill introduced by Representative Lorraine M. Seratti (R-Spread Eagle) was heard before the Committee on Campaigns and Elections.

Under current campaign finance law, campaign contributors residing in Wisconsin must identify their name, place of employment and additional information if they contribute over \$20 to a candidate. However, contributors and special interest groups located outside of Wisconsin are not required to disclose the source of the contributions they funnel into Wisconsin political committees.

“Nationally, we have seen foreign interests contributing money to the election of our highest offices. It does a great disservice to the voting public to allow the source of funding for political races to remain, for all intents and purposes, anonymous,” said Seratti.

Representative Seratti’s legislation (AB 416) removes the exception given to out-of-state political groups by requiring them to report the same information as their in-state counterparts.

“If individuals or special interest groups from outside our state wish to be involved in political races in Wisconsin, we have a right to know who they are, where their contributions come from and in what amounts,” Seratti testified at the hearing.

Representative Steve Freese, Chairman for the Committee on Campaigns and Elections indicated during the hearing that this piece of legislation should definitely be included in a campaign finance reform package that will be introduced later this session.

Seratti concluded last week’s hearing by stating the increased paperwork out-of-state contributors would have to go through is a small price to pay if it makes the public more knowledgeable about where campaign contributions come from.

People interested in learning more about this legislation are encouraged to contact Representative Seratti toll-free at 888-534-0036.

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WITTENBERG AND BIRNAMWOOD, WISCONSIN

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1999

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NUMBER 11

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People interested in learning more about this legislation are encouraged to contact Representative Seratti toll-free at 888-534-0036.



Bringing Elections Back to the People

Campaign Finance Reform Agenda

PRESS CONFERENCE PACKET

Tuesday, September 14, 1999

ASSEMBLY REPUBLICAN CAUCUS

CONTACTS

State Representative Steve Freese.....(608) 266-7502
Chairman, Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections

State Representative Scott Walker.....(608) 266-9180
Member, Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections

Chad Taylor.....(608) 261-5683
Chief Legal Counsel, Assembly Speaker Scott Jensen

Brian Dake.....(608) 266-1452
Legislative Services Director, Assembly Republican Caucus

OVERALL MESSAGES AND THEMES

- ✪ While some lawmakers chase after the elusive "holy grail" of a comprehensive campaign finance reform plan, Assembly Republicans believe we can pass several incremental steps right now that have bipartisan support in the Legislature.
- ✪ We're not willing to just sit back and wait for some magic bullet that will solve all of our problems in one shot. While it's encouraging that both parties are working on comprehensive campaign finance reform, we should not pass up the opportunity to pass individual items that everyone agrees on right now.
- ✪ Over the past two legislative sessions, the Assembly has passed several individual campaign finance reform provisions that the Senate refused to act upon. We will continue to send reform proposals over to the Senate in the hope that Senators will pass them.
- ✪ Anyone 'can talk the talk' on campaign finance reform. But Assembly Republicans have been 'walking the walk' as well.
- ✪ Assembly Republicans have been "practicing what we preach" on campaign finance reform. Republican legislators have not held campaign fundraising events in Dane County, nor have we accepted Political Action Committee (PAC) contributions this year while lawmakers are voting on legislation.
- ✪ Elections belong to local voters. Our proposals recognize that the answer to the problems in the current system lie in greater disclosure of contributions and greater involvement by individuals at the local level.
- ✪ If the Legislature cannot pass a few consensus campaign finance reform measures now, how can it pass a major reform package later? Assembly Republicans realize that, to get the job done, we have to start somewhere.

BACKGROUND

- 📖 Over the last few election cycles, it has become obvious that a new trend is developing in politics. In these cycles, special interest groups have begun to take a larger monetary role in the game than before, and overall campaign spending has increased.
- 📖 In the 1998 election, special interest groups spent about **\$1,256,500** to give Democrats control of the state Senate. (*Wisconsin Democracy Campaign*)
- 📖 The Washington, D.C.-based Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee (DLCC) pumped \$271,000 into Wisconsin during the 1998 elections but reported raising just \$25,000 in the state. The balance was raised out of state, but as a "non-resident committee" in Wisconsin, the DLCC didn't have to itemize the out-of-state contributors. (*Center for Responsive Politics*)
- 📖 Since none of the money it raises is spent on federal elections, the DLCC does not file campaign finance reports with the Federal Election Commission. Rather, the DLCC establishes political action committees in numerous states. Many of these states have less stringent campaign finance laws than the federal government, so money can be raised in larger amounts and from a wider range of sources. Without collecting the campaign finance reports from all the individual states, it's impossible to see how much money is being raised and how it is being spent. (*Center for Responsive Politics*)
- 📖 In Wisconsin, the DLCC bankrolled "SuperPACs," which are political action committees established to run unrestricted "independent" expenditure campaigns for or against state and local candidates. (*Center for Responsive Politics*)
- 📖 The DLCC pumped \$145,000 last October into a SuperPAC called Independent Citizens for Democracy and \$10,000 last November into Wisconsin 2000. Other Wisconsin PACs receiving DLCC backing were Future Wisconsin (\$85,000) and Vote November 3rd (\$21,000). (*Center for Responsive Politics*)
- 📖 The DLCC also funneled \$15,000 into the 35th Assembly District special election campaign of Sarah Waukau 10 days before the election. (*Wisconsin Democracy Campaign*)

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM -- 1999 FALL AGENDA

Curbing the influence of "SuperPACs"

Assembly Republican Proposal: Require out-of-state "SuperPACs" to show that any money they spend in Wisconsin was raised in compliance with our state election laws.

Talking point: The public has a right to know which outside groups are attempting to influence their local elections.

Ban PAC-to PAC contributions

Assembly Republican Proposal: Prohibit a PAC from contributing any amount over \$100 to another PAC.

Talking point: It is nearly impossible for voters to know who is influencing their local election if PACs can launder unlimited amounts of money through each other.

No more taxpayer-financed warchests

Assembly Republican Proposal: Require candidates to repay their public finance grant if they have money leftover in their campaign account.

Talking point: Wisconsin taxpayers should not subsidize huge campaign warchests stuffed with past public financing grants.

Follow the rules, or else...

Assembly Republican Proposal: Make compliance with public financing reporting requirements a condition to receive a grant in a future race.

Talking point: Why give taxpayer money to candidates who have broken the rules in the past?

No federal to state campaign transfers

Assembly Republican Proposal: Prohibit money raised for a federal election from being spent on a state campaign.

Talking point: Under current law, money raised for a state office cannot be used for a federal election. The law should be consistent in the opposite scenario as well.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM -- SEPTEMBER FLOOR ACTION

The following bills are in the Rules Committee and will be scheduled for floor action this month:

Assembly Bill 234

Relating to: qualification of candidates for justice of the supreme court for grants from the Wisconsin election campaign fund, court fees and making an appropriation.

Assembly Bill 235

Relating to: false reporting of certain disbursements and obligations under the campaign finance law and providing a penalty.

Assembly Bill 240

Relating to: filing of declarations of candidacy and recording of votes received by write-in candidates in certain elections.

Assembly Bill 337

Relating to: payment and amounts of fees for recounts of elections to protect local governments and their taxpayers from the costs of frivolous election recounts.

Assembly Bill 343

Relating to: authorization for electors who are victims of domestic abuse to be listed confidentially on poll and registration lists and providing penalties.

Assembly Bill 363

Relating to: the composition of municipal boards of canvassers in certain municipalities.

Assembly Bill 410

Relating to: acceptance of political contributions made by owners, operators or managers of casinos or racetracks and providing penalties.

Assembly Bill 416

Relating to: reporting of information by nonresident registrants under the campaign finance law.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM -- ASSEMBLY REPUBLICAN RESULTS

Since Republicans won the majority, the state Assembly has taken steps toward keeping elections clean in Wisconsin:

Restricting distribution of taxpayer-funded materials - 1999 Assembly Bill 110 (Suder)

To prevent taxpayer-financed materials from influencing the outcome of an election, this bill prohibits an elected official not seeking reelection from distributing 50 or more of the same publicly-funded materials during a campaign. **Passed Assembly 83 - 13 on March 25, 1999. Currently awaiting action in the Senate.**

Qualifying for public financing – 1999 Assembly Bill 216 (Kaufert)

This bill requires legislative candidates, in order to be eligible to receive a grant from the Wisconsin Election Campaign Fund (WECF), to raise at least 50 percent of their qualifying money from residents in a county having territory within the district which the candidate seeks to represent. **Passed Assembly 76 -18 on March 23, 1999. Currently awaiting action in the Senate.** *(Also passed on a voice vote March 19, 1998 as 1997 AB 508. The Senate did not take action on the bill)*

Disbursements by former personal campaign committees - 1999 Assembly Bill 217 (Carpenter).

If a candidate dies or ceases to be an active candidate, their committee could not transfer to another campaign any funds it received prior to filing notice with the elections board. **Passed Assembly 70 -25 on March 23, 1999. Currently awaiting action in the Senate.**

False information from campaign questionnaires - 1999 Assembly Bill 208 (Montgomery)

Special interest questionnaires often tell candidates that if they fail to respond to their survey, the non-response will be counted as a particular answer. This bill would make that practice illegal. **Passed Assembly on a voice vote, May 19, 1999. Currently awaiting action in the Senate.**

Prohibiting Contributions from Foreign Nationals – 1999 Assembly Bill 215 (Jensen)

AB 215 prohibits foreign nationals from making contributions to any candidate for state or local office in this state, or to any individual, committee or group attempting to influence an election for state or local office or a referendum. **Passed Assembly 95 - 0 on March 23, 1999. Currently awaiting action in the Senate.** *(Also passed March 24, 1998 as 1997 AB 925 on a 91-4 vote. The Senate did not take action on the bill)*

Electronic Filing of Campaign Finance Reports - 1997 Wisconsin Act 230 (Baldwin, AB 150)

For better public access, 1997 Wisconsin Act 230 requires committees (including candidates) that register with the Elections Board to file their reports electronically if they have received contributions in excess of \$20,000. In addition, the law also requires the Elections Board to accept a report electronically from any registrant, regardless of whether or not the registrant meets the \$20,000 threshold. Finally, the bill requires the Elections Board to make available (at a price not to exceed cost) to registrants software that will assist them in filing their reports electronically.

False Reporting of Independent Expenditures – 1997 Assembly Bill 277 (Seratti)

Under 1997 Assembly Bill 277, an individual or committee which overstates or understates by more than \$5,000 the amount of an independent expenditure made during the last seven days prior to a primary or general election would be required to forfeit an amount equal to the amount overstated or understated in excess of \$5,000. On March 19, 1998, the Assembly passed AB 277 on a voice vote. The Senate did not take action on the bill.

Omnibus Campaign Finance Reform - 1995 Assembly Bill 37 (Walker)

On February 28, 1995, the Assembly passed AB 37 on a 50-48 vote. The Senate took no action on the bill. This proposal reduced the influence of special interests by strengthening political parties and public financing, and by providing greater disclosure to the public. The bill:

- reduced the amount of PAC money that a public financing recipient could receive and restricted PAC to PAC transfers;
- curbed the influence of independent expenditures by allowing a publicly-financed candidate to exceed spending limits in order to offset independent expenditures. It also allowed candidates targeted by independent expenditures to exceed the limit on contributions they may accept from political parties;
- required paid or volunteer telephone operators to provide a script to the Elections Board within 24 hours of commencing multiple phone calls that promote the election or defeat of a candidate;
- required candidates to include on their campaign finance reports not only the individual that gave through a conduit, but also the name of the conduit; and
- prohibited employers and unions from automatically deducting from an employee's wage, without the employee's prior consent, money which is earmarked for a PAC or a conduit.



WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEPTEMBER 14, 1999

CONTACT: STATE REPRESENTATIVE STEVE FREESE, (608) 266-7502
STATE REPRESENTATIVE SCOTT WALKER, (608) 266-9180

ASSEMBLY LAWMAKERS PLEDGE CONTINUED PROGRESS ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Madison...Although bipartisan consensus on a comprehensive campaign finance reform plan remains elusive, there are several steps the Legislature should take right now to curb the influence of out-of-state interest groups and strengthen public financing, two Assembly GOP lawmakers said today.

"Wisconsin has a proud tradition of open and clean government," said Assembly Speaker Pro-tempore Steve Freese (R-Dodgeville). "But that tradition is being threatened by special interest 'SuperPACs' outside Wisconsin that evade our reporting requirements and prevent local voters from knowing who is trying to influence their election."

The Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee (DLCC) pumped \$271,000 into Wisconsin during the 1998 elections but reported raising just \$25,000 in the state, according to the Center for Responsible Politics. The balance was raised out of state, but as a "non-resident committee" in Wisconsin, the Washington, D.C.-based DLCC didn't have to itemize the out-of-state contributors.

"These alarming figures show that we can't afford to wait for the 'holy grail' that solves every single one of our problems," said state Representative Scott Walker (R-Wauwatosa). "It makes more sense to take incremental steps right now to reduce special interest group influence and return local elections to local voters."

Freese and Walker outlined fall agenda proposals Tuesday that will:

Curb the influence of "SuperPACs": The public has a right to know which outside groups are attempting to influence their local elections. That's why Assembly Republicans will require out-of-state "SuperPACs" to show that **all** money they spend in Wisconsin is raised in compliance with our state election laws.

Ban PAC-to PAC contributions: Assembly Republicans would prohibit a PAC from contributing any amount over \$100 to another PAC. It is nearly impossible for voters to know who is influencing their local election if PACs can launder unlimited amounts of money through each other.

Prevent taxpayer-financed warchests: Candidates should repay their public finance grant if they have money leftover in their campaign account. Wisconsin taxpayers should not subsidize huge campaign warchests stuffed with past public financing grants.

Freese and Walker also called upon their Senate counterparts to act upon several Assembly campaign finance reform measures already passed this year.