



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF CONCORD-CARLISLE**

P.O. Box 34, Concord, MA 01742 [www.lwvcc.com](http://www.lwvcc.com) [league@lwvcc.com](mailto:league@lwvcc.com)

*Making Democracy Work*

---

January 7, 2010

Judy Duffy, Chair  
Advocacy Committee  
LWVUS Board

Dear Ms. Duffy:

We are contacting you on behalf of the LWVCC to ask that campaign finance reform be designated as a top tier advocacy priority of the LWVUS during the 2010-2012 program cycle.

While there are many urgent issues that need to be addressed by Congress, a review of critical legislative efforts in the past year alone leads to the unavoidable conclusion that money has become the most influential determinant of legislative outcomes. Special interests are robbing the electorate of its voice and blocking the essential changes needed to deal effectively with the needs of the citizenry and the monumental issues we face as a country.

The current battle to enact meaningful climate change and health care legislation, two LWVUS advocacy priorities for 2009, are prime examples of this disturbing phenomenon. Unless we deal effectively and comprehensively with the underlying reasons for 'politics as usual', special interests will continue to stymie the democratic process, with diluted and potentially counterproductive legislation as the result.

Given the League's comparatively limited resources in relation to special interests, we urge that the LWVUS focus on fundamental reforms that underlie the legislative and election process.

The Fair Elections Now Act (S.752 and H.R. 1826) is an example of such reform. This legislation would authorize publicly financed campaigns for members of the U.S. House and Senate.

The LWVUS is already on record as being in support of an earlier version of the Fair Elections Now Act (S. 936), as documented in LWVUS President, Mary Wilson's 2007 letter to the Senate (attached). The current House and Senate versions of the bill contain many of the key provisions needed to ensure its effectiveness. Additionally, there is bipartisan support for this much needed reform with 124 members of the House of Representatives listed as co-sponsors.

On November 6, 2008, the LWVUS joined forces with the Brennan Center for Justice, the Campaign Legal Center, Common Cause, Democracy 21, Public Citizen and U.S. PIRG to issue a Government Integrity Reform Agenda for 111th Congress (<http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=12350>).

Repairing the public financing system for presidential elections and creating a new public financing system for congressional elections is cited as the "overriding priority for fixing Washington" in this document.

There will surely be an ongoing need for public oversight and monitoring of the legislative process, but establishing true campaign and election reform through public financing will level the playing field so that the merits of legislation and the public good—rather than special interests—will dictate outcomes.

We urge the LWVUS to designate campaign finance reform as its highest advocacy priority for 2010-2012. There can be no greater cause than the restoration of our democratic process and the confidence of the people, and no more fitting role for the LWVUS as a force on behalf of that repair.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Shannon, LWVCC Co-Chair  
978-371-1806

Paula Vandever, LWVCC Co-Chair  
978-369-9268