

**LWVIL Issues Briefing  
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**Campaign Finance Reform  
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On January 1, 2011, PA 96-0832 took effect placing limits on contributions that individuals, corporations, unions and associations, and PACs can make to candidates and political parties in primary and general elections. Additionally, the law imposes some limits on the movement of money between political committees in primary elections. *It is important to note that PA 96-0832 does not provide for limits on contributions from political party and legislative caucus committees to candidate political committees in general elections.*

Subsequently, contribution limits in PA 96-0832 have been weakened. A provision of PA 97-0766 passed in 2012 removes limits on all contributions to all candidates running in an election where spending by an independent expenditure committee (or super PAC) reaches a threshold amount of \$250,000 in support of a candidate in a statewide race or \$100,00 for all other elective offices. The 2013 Election Code Omnibus Bill (PA 98-0115) removes contribution limits in more races than the 2012 law. Contribution limits are removed in races where multiple Super PACs combine to spend above \$250,000 in a statewide race or \$100,000 in any other race. *Contribution limits from all sources for all candidates in the 2014 race for Governor in Illinois have been lifted since a self-funded candidate has given \$500,000 to his campaign.*

An Illinois Campaign Finance Reform Task Force (IL CFRTF) created by PA 96-0832 was charged with considering a system of public financing by State government for the conduct and finance of election campaigns, and conducting a thorough review of the implementation of campaign finance reform legislation in Illinois. The LWVIL presented a statement at a January 17, 2013 hearing calling for greater transparency in elections, and for closing loopholes in Illinois' Election Code by requiring greater disclosure of independent expenditures. At the April 22, 2013 hearing the LWVIL urged the IL CFRTF to recommend that the General Assembly maintain campaign contribution limits.

The LWVUS appointed a Campaign Finance Task Force in 2012 to serve as a resource to the LWVUS Board and provide information and input on campaign finance issues including short-term and long-term strategies for reform. The Task Force has provided information on Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (FEC) and analyzed proposed constitutional amendments relating to Citizens United that have been introduced in the U.S. Congress.

In 2013 the IL General Assembly adopted SJR27. This resolution urges Congress to adopt a constitutional amendment reversing the Citizens United v. FEC ruling and related cases by clarifying that corporations and other artificial entities are not people with constitutional rights, and that money is property, not speech, and therefore can be regulated. *LWVIL was not able to support this measure as the LWVUS is not supporting a constitutional amendment at this time because it has not yet found a proposed amendment that can be supported within our positions.*

The US Supreme Court heard arguments in the case of *McCutcheon v. FEC* on October 8, 2013. Currently there are limits on aggregate federal campaign contributions. Political donors are limited not

only in the amount of money they can give to a particular candidate or committee, they are also limited in the amount of money they can give in one election cycle spread amongst all candidates and committees - a figure that currently stands at \$123,200. The outcome of *McCutcheon v. FEC* will determine whether the overall caps on the amount of money that individuals can donate to multiple candidates or political parties are a violation of the First Amendment. *LWVUS along with the Campaign Legal Center and other groups joined an amicus brief to the US Supreme Court in the McCutcheon v. FEC case in support of maintaining aggregate limits on federal campaign contributions.*

*LWVIL will monitor legislation in the area of campaign finance in 2014. The most likely legislation to be proposed is in the areas of disclosure of political spending and public financing.*