

Campaign Finance Reform

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In response to the corruption charges against and subsequent impeachment of the sitting governor in early 2009 the IL Lt. Governor created the Illinois Reform Commission, the IL General Assembly convened the Joint Committee on Government Reform and CHANGE Illinois a new coalition of civic, business, labor, professional, non-profit and philanthropic organizations was formed. LWVIL along with CHANGE Illinois called for an end to Illinois' unregulated campaign finance system and for creation of a system of campaign contribution limits, like those in use at the federal level. In March 2009, LWVIL presented Testimony to the Joint Committee on Government Reform and sent TFAs to members asking them to contact their legislators. The General Assembly passed HB7, which fell short of real reform. Under pressure from League members, the press and the public in August 2009 the Governor vetoed HB7.

CHANGE Illinois and the League urged the governor and legislative leaders to work together to craft a stronger piece of reform legislation to be passed during the October veto session. As a result of many hours of negotiations between CHANGE Illinois and the legislative leaders and their staffs a major Campaign Finance Reform Bill, SB1466, passed the IL General Assembly on the last day of the Fall Veto Session, October 30th, and was signed by the governor on December 9, 2009 becoming PA96-0832. The gains in the legislation include:

- The first limits on money coming into the political system with
 - Limits for individuals, corporations, unions and associations and PACs for the primary and general elections
 - Limits for political party and legislative caucus committees during primary elections
- A Framework for better disclosure and enforcement
 - Contributions of \$1000 or more must be reported electronically within 5 days
 - More detailed quarterly (rather than semi-annual) reports from campaign committees of contributions and expenditures
 - Random audits conducted by State Board of Elections to ensure compliance with the laws
 - Enhanced penalties for violation of the law's provisions

There has been a lot of criticism of the legislation because the political party and legislative caucus committees are not limited in the money that they can transfer to candidates in the general election. However, having limits in the primary is an important step. It will encourage more people to challenge an incumbent or party-backed candidate and help level the playing field for challengers.

Senate Bill 2532 has been introduced this legislative session to provide contribution limits in General Elections for party and legislative leader campaign committees. LWVIL will be working along with CHANGE Illinois to pass this legislation. The chart below compares the current Primary Limits to the proposed General Election Limits.

Parties and Legislative Leaders Aggregate Limits to following candidate committees:	Primary Limit (SB 1466) Effective: Jan. 1, 2011	General Election Limit proposed in SB 2532
Statewide office	\$200,000	\$300,000
Illinois Senate, Supreme Court or Appellate Court in 1 st Judicial District, and anyone running county-wide in county of at least 1 million residents	\$125,000	\$175,000
Illinois House, Supreme Court or Appellate Court outside the 1 st Judicial District, all countywide offices in counties of less than 1 million residents, municipal and countywide offices in Cook County other than those elected countywide in Cook.	\$75,000	\$125,000
All other offices	\$50,000	\$85,000