

## Clean Elections Up-Date—January 20, 2007

Good news! Clean Elections is on the move in West Virginia. Both the WV Senate and the House of Delegates introduced the WV Public Campaign Financing Act during the second week of the legislative session—S.B. 118 and H.B. 2371.

Please thank the current co-sponsors and also encourage members of the House Judiciary to support this measure. See below for a list of talking points. For more information see: [www.wvoter-owned.org](http://www.wvoter-owned.org)

During the 2006 election, Massey CEO Don Blankenship spent millions of dollars trying to influence elections and unseat several dozen legislators; but his independent campaign failed. This happened because our state legislature, with your support, took a bold and meaningful step in 2005 to help reduce the role that special interests play in West Virginia's political campaigns.

While Mr. Blankenship could spend as much money as he wanted to on political campaigns in 2006, he had to clearly identify that he had paid for the advertisements. In the previous campaign, his shadowy 527 organization, "And for the Sake of the Kids" helped defeat a WV Supreme Court Justice because no disclosure requirements were in place during 2004.

In 2006, voters weren't misled, and Mr. Blankenship did not succeed. Our legislators have taken a first step towards meaningful campaign finance reform by enacting a law to regulate 527 organizations. Now it's time for them to take another bold step and support the West Virginia Public Campaign Financing Act—H.B. 2371 or S.B. 118.

Please write, e-mail the members of the House Judiciary Committee (listed below) and ask them to support the WV Public Campaign Financing Act, H.B. 2371. If they are a sponsor, please thank them for their support and leadership. Toll free number: 1-877-565-3447

Some talking points:

The cost for running for political office in West Virginia is sky-rocketing! In West Virginia, public interest concerns are frequently overshadowed by big special interests contributors. In 2004, candidates in West Virginia spent more than \$6 million dollars and fewer than 1% of West Virginians contribute to political campaigns.

Public funding of elections has been successfully implemented in several states, including Maine and Arizona. In Maine, nearly 80% of all their legislators were elected using public funds in 2004.

### **Public funding of elections will:**

- Provide campaign finance reform that will improve our democratic process and help re-engage the public in issues of concern of our state.

- Help reduce the role of special interest on political campaigns and the shaping of public policy.
- Help equalize funding among candidates.
- Give candidates a voluntary way to qualify for public funding.
- Free a legislator to vote his/her conscience.
- Allow candidates to spend more time talking to voters and less time raising money
- Candidates are elected on the merit of their ideas, not on the amount of money they can raise.
- Provide a ready-made list of grassroots volunteers from the list of qualifying contributors.
- Eliminate costs associated with fundraising events.

Contact information for all WV legislators can be found by going on-line to [www.wvoter-owned.org](http://www.wvoter-owned.org). On the left hand side of the front page, scroll down to the area entitled “send a personal message.” By clicking on “WV District maps” (either House or Senate) you will find phone, e-mail and other contact information of your representatives.

**Members of the WV House of Delegates 2007-Judiciary Committee**

Delegate Carrie Webster - Chair  
 Delegate Bill Proudfoot - Vice-Chair  
 Delegate John Ellem\* – R-Minority Chair  
 Delegate John Overington – R-Minority Vice-Chair  
 Delegate Bonnie Brown\*  
 Delegate Mike Burdiss  
 Delegate Barbara Fleischauer\*  
 Delegate Nancy Peoples Guthrie  
 Delegate Lidella Hrutkay  
 Delegate Melvin Kessler  
 Delegate Marshall Long  
 Delegate Linda Longstreth  
 Delegate Virginia Mahan  
 Delegate Tim Miley  
 Delegate Cliff Moore\*  
 Delegate John Pino  
 Delegate Alex Shook  
 Delegate William Stemple  
 Delegate Robert Tabb  
 Delegate Scott Varner  
 Delegate Tom Azinger-R  
 Delegate Bill Hamilton-R  
 Delegate Patrick Lane-R\*  
 Delegate Robert Schadler  
 Delegate Kelli Sobonya-R

\*Sponsor of H.B. 2371

**Sponsors of the WV Public Campaign Financing Act**

**S.B. 118**

Senator Jeffrey Kessler-D (lead sponsor)  
Senator Larry Edgell-D  
Senator Dan Foster-D  
Senator Jesse O. Guills-R  
Senator Jon Hunter-D  
Senator Evan Jenkins-D  
Senator Shirley Love-D  
Senator Brooks McCabe-D  
Senator Robert Plymale-D  
Senator Erik Wells-D  
Senator Vic Sprouse-R  
Senator Randy White-D  
Senator John Yoder-R

**H.B. 2371 (has maximum allowable number of sponsors)**

Delegate Jon Amores-D (lead sponsor)  
Delegate Bonnie Brown-D  
Delegate Richard Browning-D  
Delegate Mike Caputo-D (majority whip)  
Delegate Joe DeLong-D  
Delegate John Doyle-D  
Delegate John Ellem-R  
Delegate Barbara Fleishauer-D  
Delegate Patrick Lane-R  
Delegate Cliff Moore-D  
Delegate Don Perdue-D