

**DRAFT 2016 Proposal for Action on Disclosure  
(January - March 2016)**

**Background/Political Context: 2015 Legislative Session**

We rightfully suspected going into the 2015 session that our role may be to play defense given the new conservative leadership. This was quickly confirmed when Sen. Mitch Carmichael-R, introduced SB 541, a terrible campaign finance bill. As introduced, this bill would have repealed our \$1,000 limit on contributions to candidates, PACs and parties, as well as our long-standing corporate contribution ban—allowing unlimited corporate contributions. Thankfully, we were able to turn things around in the Senate, where the bill advanced and passed with the prohibition on direct corporate contributions restored, and contribution limits capped at the federal limit (\$2,700 currently). In addition, the amended version strengthened disclosure of third party political spending. The Senate Judiciary Committee held lengthy deliberations developing a bipartisan compromise, which the full Senate passed overwhelmingly. However, the House Judiciary Committee hastily rewrote the bill, removed the requirements for increased disclosure and sent the bill to the House floor on a strictly party-line vote. The bill died when House leadership decided to forego further consideration of the bill, rather than debate amendments in the closing days of the session.

*How do we build on the success we had in 2015 to continue to advance disclosure and increase accountability and transparency in West Virginia elections?*

**Lobbying & Grassroots Advocacy:**

1. Print and circulate postcards with tailored disclosure message that fits partner organizations' missions. (ASAP) The idea is that we would:

- Collect the tailored disclosure message from you that fits your organizations mission.
- Have the postcards printed for you (we pay the printing).
- Ship them to you and you to give them to your members.
- Have your members fill one card out and put it in the mail to a predetermined (targeted) legislator.

2. Develop and circulate an online petition targeting key legislators and the Governor urging them to support disclosure. (January 2016)

*Will partners share with their supporters/members and ask them to sign up for our email list?*

3. Meet with legislative leadership and new members [or secondary targets], as well as legislative allies [*in district?* and] during legislative interim meetings to discuss our plans, ask for their support for disclosure [*and public financing?*] and recruit bill sponsors. January – March 2016)

4. Work with and provide assistance to legislative allies, the Secretary of State and their staff during the 2016 legislative session to support, oppose and/or make changes to legislation

relevant to judicial elections, public financing, disclosure and other election reforms (January – March 2016)

5. Activate our members and supporters via action alerts during the 2016 session. (January - March 2016)

6. Hold an advocacy day and press conference at the legislature. (January 2016)

*Anniversary of Citizens United (January 21)? Tie in with days/events already scheduled? Days we should avoid? We could also release Logan's report at this time.*

**Outreach & Communications** to raise public awareness about disclosure, public financing and other campaign finance reform efforts:

1. Develop a one-pager based on Logan's analysis of independent expenditures and spending on electioneering communications in the 2014 election [and other outreach materials] on the importance of disclosure. (ASAP - January 2015)

*Suggestions on what to include/highlight from the report?*

2. Release Logan's report to highlight the need for disclosure.

*When and how should we do this? Press release, press conference or other event to launch disclosure campaign?*

3. Write and submit op-eds for publication (statewide) that highlight the role of money in politics and the importance of having robust disclosure.

*Who is willing to submit if we draft and make relevant to your issue(s)?*

*Secondary targets that we might ask and convince?*