



Empowering People, Fighting Big Money: A Pro-Democracy, Anti-Corruption Blueprint

Every day, West Virginians pay a heavy price due to the influence of money in politics. An opioid crisis, insufficient resources for our schools, persistent poverty, and lack of opportunities to get ahead continue to plague our state. Regular West Virginians know how to solve these problems, but often our voices aren't heard in the halls of power.

The modern campaign system is broken and prevents elected officials from solving big problems. The vast majority of elected officials in West Virginia are hard-working, ethical people who want the best for our state. Unfortunately, candidates must raise a massive amount of money to run for office. This makes candidates unduly dependent on big donors that drown out the voices of average West Virginians who can't afford to contribute. Consequently, most voters believe that powerful interest groups use their donations to steer policy in the direction of their own interests, which may not be in the public interest.

Now we have a solution to fix the problem. The Pro-Democracy, Anti-Corruption Blueprint is a set common sense solutions that can help put our government on a path to solve problems that affect all of us. This is not about Democrat vs. Republican; this is about fixing a broken system, and moving toward a government that's more transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs of ALL West Virginians.

The Pro-Democracy, Anti-Corruption Blueprint would increase accountability and transparency in West Virginia elections, make voting more accessible to all citizen, limit the influence of big-money in our politics, ensure fairness and impartiality in our courts, and increase citizen participation in the electoral process. Will you support our Pro-Democracy, Anti-Corruption Blueprint?

EVERYONE DESERVES TO KNOW

Voters have a right to know who is spending money to influence our votes and our elected representatives. The Legislature should strengthen disclosure laws in elections and increase transparency of campaign and lobbying activities to give the public more information on who is impacting our elections and legislative decisions.

- **No Secret Money** – Put an end to big money funneled through groups with secret donors by requiring timely online disclosure of all political spending.
- Establish an **Accessible Online Voters' Guide** on the Secretary of State's website that would provide information about all candidates for statewide and legislative office, including a list of their top campaign contributors.
- **No Secret Lobbyist Meetings** – Take advantage of modern technology to require prompt reporting of meetings, who attended, and what was advocated for.
- **Require elected officials** (State Senators, Delegates, and members of the Board of Public Works) **to hold regular public forums** and provide advanced notice of the date, time, and location.
- **Establish an Office of Public Lobbying** to counterbalance corporate activity and give a greater voice to societal interests.

EVERYONE IS HELD ACCOUNTABLE

An open and transparent government requires strong enforcement of our laws and real consequences for those who violate them. The Legislature should close loopholes in our election and ethics laws, and make sure that state agencies and prosecutors have the tools they need to ensure enforcement and accountability, and combat corruption.

- **Prevent elected officials from fundraising during working hours/legislative session** when they should be serving their constituents.
- **Strengthen and enforce the revolving door** to prohibit elected officials from negotiating for jobs while in office and bar them from paid lobbying activity for several years once they leave.
- **Prevent and punish coordination** of political spending between candidates and outside groups.
- **Make it illegal for politicians to take money from lobbyists** – People who are paid to lobby cannot donate to politicians and should be prohibited from bundling contributions from their employers and clients.
- **Remove conflicts of interest from our courts** - Adopt an objective recusal standard so that judges who take money from someone cannot preside over their case.

EVERYONE CAN PARTICIPATE

Democracy requires everyone to have voice in the decisions affecting their lives; from equal access to the ballot box, to the right to have your voice heard above the special interests that try to buy our elections. The Legislature should give a greater voice to each citizen and lower barriers to participation in political life by:

Changing the Way Elections Are Funded and Empowering Small Donors

- **Improve, strengthen, and expand** existing laws making **public campaign financing** available for candidates who agree to limit their fundraising. Thus enabling a more diverse set of candidates to run for office and be accountable to their constituents rather than to their largest campaign contributors.
- Provide limited **tax credits for small donations** or small dollar vouchers to encourage active participation of small donors and give everyday people a stronger voice in our elections.

Protecting and Expanding Access to the Polls, and Increasing Voter Participation

- **Defend and expand Automatic Voter Registration (AVR)** – Our voter rolls and registration systems are outdated, error-prone, and costly. AVR can save taxpayer money, increase accuracy, and improve security, while ensuring that all eligible voters are able to participate on Election Day.
- **Implement a Vote-By-Mail system** - Forcing voters to take time off from work and their families to stand in long lines on a Tuesday is ineffective, insecure, and outdated. Sending ballots to voters at home and allowing them to mail it back on their own timeframe, or drop it off at a professionally staffed voting center would make voting more convenient. Voters could still vote in person or receive assistance at a voting center.
- **Provide Same Day Registration** as a fail-safe to protect eligible voters from improper voter roll purges.
- **Improve/mandate poll worker training** – Set and enforce standards for poll worker training to avoid lines and delays, and ensure eligible voters aren't disenfranchised.

Improving Redistricting, Representation, and Participation

- **End gerrymandering** – Reform the rules and make the process of drawing legislative and congressional districts transparent and impartial by establishing an independent redistricting commission.
- **Extend the filing deadline for candidates until after the end of the legislative session** and, if need be, hold the Primary Election later in the year (June 20, West Virginia Day).
- **Hold judicial elections in November**, during the General Election when turnout is generally higher.