



Minnesota Citizens for Clean Elections Newsletter

Vol. 1, No. 4 – **Fall 2018**

Welcome to the latest issue of the MnCCE newsletter!

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Upcoming Events

Special Event !: University of MN Prof. Richard Painter, 2018 candidate for U.S. Senate, member of G.W. Bush’s administration, author of books on ethics and money in politics, will talk to us about *campaign finance reform*. See **11/10**, below.

Ongoing:

Dark Money, the movie, is now available on DVD via Netflix. It explains dramatically how U.S. citizens lost their power in favor of corporations. Reclaiming our democracy is important, please view it.

October:

10/25: Updated MnCCE candidate survey on money in politics available at MnCCE website: <http://cleanelectionsmn.org/>. Scroll down to “MnCCE Candidate Survey Results.” Forward it to your friends and family so they can know where their candidates stand on money in politics.

November:

11/6 – Get out and vote! Also, use the video in this link to encourage younger people to vote! 😊 – https://blogs.mprnews.org/newscut/2018/09/can-old-people-scare-young-people-into-voting/?utm_campaign=MPR+News+-+AM+Edition+-+No+Social&utm_medium=email&utm_source=sfmc_&utm_content=C

11/10, 10:00 am – MnCCE’s semimonthly meeting at Edina Library, 5280 Grandview Sq. Our special speaker is University of MN Prof. Richard Painter.

December

12/7 1:30 pm - MnCCE Board of Directors meeting at Edina Library, 5280 Grandview Square.

12/16, 5:00 p.m.: Chair, George Beck, will talk about campaign finance reform to the District 46 DFL at Davanni’s on Winnetka Ave. in Golden Valley.

MnCCE In Action



Three-Question Survey of Minn. Candidates

Thanks to Ruth Cain and others who updated our candidate survey on money in politics. They will publicize the results via MN-Post before the election. You can see results after October 25, 2018 at: <https://cleanelectionsmn.org/mncce-candidate-survey-results-june-2018/>.

We urge each of you readers to look at the results and call your elected official(s) if their vote is not on the list. Ask them why they haven’t taken a stand – not doing so makes it obvious they do not oppose the undue influence of big/dark money in politics, and will impact your choice when you vote.

If you don’t know who represents you, go to: <https://www.commoncause.org/find-your-representative/addr/> to learn who they are at state and federal levels, and how you can reach them.

28th Amendment

Jim Herrick of MnCCE is working with two other non-profits to urge our Legislature to request Congress to initiate a 28th Constitutional Amendment, which would overturn the Supreme Court’s 2010 *Citizen’s United vs. FEC* ruling. Here is Jim’s message about their effort to get counties (and cities) to help.

(next page)

MnCCE In Action (cont'd)

28th Amendment (cont'd)

MnCCE is working with American Promise and Move-to-Amend to encourage county governments to endorse our mutual position on reversing *Citizens United*. We have invested time of many volunteers to meet with every commissioner of both Hennepin and Ramsey counties. Both have majority support among board members, but they question whether this is an appropriate issue for their boards. (Cont'd)

At this point, it would be especially helpful if county residents contacted their representative to move the issue ahead. Elected representatives are always more responsive to their constituents. I urge you to take action. It takes less than two minutes to find your representative and another five minutes to make a call or write an email. **Please help**. Then send a "blind" copy (or note about your phone call) to me so we can use it as a negotiation tool. – Jim Herrick: jherrick512@gmail.com or (763) 229-7939.

Here is how to contact your commissioner:

Hennepin County Residents:

<https://www.hennepin.us/your-government/leadership/find-commissioner>

Ramsey County Residents:

<https://www.ramseycounty.us/your-government/leadership/board-commissioners/find-your-commissioner>.

Elected officials respond better to their electorate than to external groups like MnCCE, and others.

Here are talking points (use your own words):

This should be a county issue because:

1. The state legislature has refused to grant a hearing on a bill before them to reverse *Citizens United*. The county is the next level of government and will show the state support is real.
2. *Citizens United* must be reversed before big money and dark money can be limited in our political campaigns. Any limitations passed today would very likely be reversed in the courts.
3. The flow of big money into our campaigns has a strong corrupting influence. We see many examples where special interests are placed ahead of, or in conflict with the general welfare.
4. In the 2016 election, 68% of the money donated was given by 0.5% of the population

Volunteering doesn't get any easier than this. You can help us promote the 28th Amendment with less than one hour of your time!



MnCCE In Action (cont'd)

Professional help on volunteerism

MnCCE will soon work with a professional who has expertise in working with volunteers to educate our leadership in how to attract, work with, and recognize volunteers in our organization. Meanwhile we have the following needs:



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28th Amendment Team:

We asked each of you reading this newsletter to help us push your county governments to support the 28th Amendment drive we are working on. Also, contact Jim Herrick if you are willing to help work with your city council – jherrick512@gmail.com.

Membership Team:

The team needs another team member to help us keep contact with MnCCE members. We need someone who can work with volunteers, or can help organize/format newsletters (others will provide the content). If you are interested or want info, contact Ron at: rbardal@hotmail.com or 651-633-9238.

Education Team:

Lonni Skrentner recently accepted the Education Team leader position at MnCCE. She is also on the MnCCE Board of Directors and a former Government AP teacher at the Edina High School, chaired the Edina LWV, and has taught OLLI classes on campaign finance reform and redistricting.

Lonnie says the team may move slowly for now as they contemplate a variety of audiences and messages. Feel free to contact Lonni with questions and suggestions. You can reach Lonni at: lonni.skrentner@gmail.com

Volunteering Made Easy!

Are you like me? When asked to volunteer do you sigh and think, "With all the things I already do, I can't squeeze one more thing into my schedule."

Well, good news! MnCCE has a volunteer activity that takes less than an hour a month! It is calling an elected official to request a specific action to support MnCCE's mission. We'll show you how to quickly reach the person to contact and even suggest words to say. If you can donate one hour, contact me: Ron Bardal, rbardal@hotmail.com or 651-633-9238.

Get involved. **You can help us make a difference!**



Education Corner

[View your ballot before going to the polls](#)

To see your November ballot ahead of time, go to: <https://myballotmn.sos.state.mn.us/>. Enter your zip code; hit “Go”. Enter your house # and select street; hit “Go.” Select “Click here for sample ballot,” and page down to see parties of the candidates and select “click here for polling place location” to see where you go to vote.

You can still vote early! Do it by mail – on your time schedule with no hassle. See how at this website: <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2018/09/24/video-everything-you-need-to-know-to-vote-early-2018-midterm-election>

Education Resources

<u>Books</u>	<u>Videos/Movies</u>
<u>Dark Money</u> by Jane Mayer. How billionaires drive their biased political agendas.	Dark Money (DVD from Netflix)
<u>Taxation Only With Representation</u> by Richard Painter. Corruption in campaign finance from a conservative political viewpoint.	

Editorial Section

The Culprit: Dark Money, Big Money or Both?

Many of us saw the movie “Dark Money” and/or read the book of the same name. If you missed the movie, you can view it on Netflix.

Also worth checking out: “Open Secrets” on Federal election spending and dark money – See the topics listed in the left margin: https://www.opensecrets.org/outsidespending/nonprof_summ.php.

We know dark money is bad for our election system, and the health of our democracy. Worse, we don’t know from where it originates! But what about “big money” spent by corporations and wealthy individuals? We can track where that comes from, so no problem with that, right?

Wrong! Following are two examples, of many, on how big money influences us and those we elect.

Big drug companies spend millions promoting use of opioids without conceding opioids are a problem. They expended huge sums on donations (bribes?) to members of Congress to cut back resources for DEA drug enforcement. Source: “60 Minutes” program on CBS earlier this year, describing the drug money problem.



The fossil fuels industry provides school science books. Sounds benevolent, right? Wrong! The Heartland Institute, which is backed by big oil interests, is trying to spread climate change denial in schools across the U.S. by sending textbooks with false “facts.” In Oklahoma, for example, 14,000 teachers use oil industry curricula. The “free” text books play down the impact of climate change on our environment, so children are led to disbelieve what 99% of scientists say is true regarding the impact on our environment. For more details see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXoAz6jNEG8&feature=youtu.be>

Though we can identify sources of big money, that doesn’t mean big money is not detrimental to our health, environment, representation, etc.

“But, MnCCE is about clean elections, not drugs and environment,” some might say. True, but stopping dark money in elections isn’t enough. We’d still have citizens uninformed regarding the negative influence big money has on those we elect (as well as everyday citizens). We would not have solved the problem of elected officials favoring their oligarchs at the expense of those of us who elected them.



Letters to the Editor:

Letters to the editor are welcome (reserving the right to edit for sake of space, if necessary). Send letters to rbardal@hotmail.com.

Your editor, Ron Bardal

