

RELIGIOUS LEADERS FOR CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

c/o National Council of Churches, 110 Maryland Ave. NE, Washington, DC 20002, 202-544-2350

July 10, 2001

Dear Representative:

On behalf of Religious Leaders for Campaign Finance Reform, we urge you to support a strong Shays-Meehan bill. This legislation provides for modest changes in a system that is in desperate need of repair. Attached are the names of the many religious leaders that have supported Shays-Meehan or McCain-Feingold in recent months, including 23 from national religious bodies and over 300 others from state and regional organizations.

Campaign finance reform is an issue with significant moral implications. As sure as apathy, cynicism, and mistrust work against religious principles, so are they the enemies of healthy democracy. The current system of campaign financing feeds these negative forces. The soft money regime, for example, makes a mockery of current contribution limits. Similarly, sham issue ads are created with electioneering in mind, yet for technical reasons are not regulated as such. Both these tactics—soft money and sham issue ads—are devious attempts to skirt existing law, and they should be banned and regulated, respectively.

Campaign finance reform is an issue that matters to the American public. People want to feel that their government is trustworthy and responsive to their needs. They recognize the role campaign contributions play in the political process, and thus overwhelmingly support the idea of campaign finance reform. At the same time, the appearance of corruption in the present system has made the public cynical about the likelihood of reform happening.

In the coming days, you and the House of Representatives will have the opportunity to show the American people that their cynicism is unwarranted, and that the flagrant exploitation of legal loopholes has no place in our nation's campaign financing process.

While further reform, including voluntary major public financing of election campaigns, will undoubtedly be necessary, the Shays-Meehan bill is a significant first step in building fairness and public confidence in our system of government.

If our society is to regain its moral footing, our elected officials must set an example and lead the way. Congress now faces an historic opportunity to enact long-overdue reform. By passing the Shays-Meehan bill, you will help to restore the public's trust—and faith—in the American political process.

Sincerely,



Robert K. Cavanaugh
Legislative Director
Unitarian Universalist Association of
Congregations



Mark Pelavin
Associate Director
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

Co-Chairs of Religious Leaders for Campaign Finance Reform

Religious Leaders for Campaign Finance Reform
c/o National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.
110 Maryland Avenue, NE, Washington DC, 20002 (202) 544-2350

RELIGIOUS LEADERS FOR
CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM¹
SUPPORT "CLEAN MONEY, CLEAN ELECTIONS"
CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM ACT OF 1999

Religious Leaders Call Public Financing the Key to
an Ethical Campaign Finance System
May 6, 1999

Religious Leaders for Campaign Finance Reform commends Senators John Kerry (D-MA) and Paul Wellstone (D-MN) for their introduction of the "Clean Money, Clean Elections" Campaign Finance Reform Act of 1999 (S.982). As members of faith communities, our responsibility towards our political system is to foster a relationship between politics and morality that promotes a truly representative government. Serious campaign finance reform, which takes the undue influence of special interests out of politics, is a vital element in this important process. "Clean Money, Clean Elections," which offers public financing for those candidates who voluntarily forgo private contributions and accept strict spending limits, is more effective than other reform legislation because it is *comprehensive* reform. "Clean Money, Clean Elections" is a real solution to the ethical challenges of today's campaign finance system.

Religious communities have been instrumental in the passage of public financing measures similar to "Clean Money, Clean Elections" in four states: Arizona, Maine, Vermont and Massachusetts. Religious communities are currently activating their grassroots to pass public financing measures in a number of other states including Oregon, Missouri, Michigan, Idaho, Montana, North Carolina and New Mexico. *Religious Leaders for Campaign Finance Reform* will play an active role in these reform battles in order to prove that public financing is the key to an ethical campaign finance system.

Our religious traditions teach us that a system of governance must recognize the needs of its citizens. The current campaign finance system runs afoul of these traditions by creating every incentive for politicians to give priority to those special interests who have made campaign donations. Public financing of elections will reconnect the needs of the community to those whose responsibility it is to address them. With this in mind, *Religious Leaders For Campaign Finance Reform* stands behind the "Clean Money, Clean Elections" bill and urges its speedy consideration.

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¹ *Religious Leaders for Campaign Finance Reform* is a working group of religious leaders (co-chaired by Reverend Jay Lintner, Director National Council of the Churches of Christ and Mark Pelavin, Associate Director Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism) dedicated to improving our nation's democracy by taking the undue influence of special interests out of politics, reducing the escalating costs of elections, and leveling the playing field for candidates.

Religious Leaders for Campaign Finance Reform

c/o NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE U.S.A.
110 MARYLAND AVENUE, NE, WASHINGTON DC, 20002 (202) 544-2350

Communities of Faith Support the Discharge Petition

May 6, 1999

Dear Representative,

We, the undersigned religious organizations, urge you to sign and support the Discharge Petition of the Shays-Meehan Campaign Finance Reform Bill, H.R. 417. This bill, which passed the 105th Congress by a vote of 252-179, is an imperative first step toward the reform that is necessary to return government to the control of the citizenry.

Campaign finance reform is a moral matter for the religious community. The temptation to use money to buy unjust favors is an ancient one that is dealt with often in scripture. The prophet Amos thundered against those merchants in Israel who "sell the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes... and push the afflicted out of the way..." (Amos 2:6-7 NRSV). Psalm 15 defines upright persons as those who "...stand by their oath even to their hurt... and do not take a bribe against the innocent."

We believe that government plays a pivotal role in promoting justice for all people and in providing for the common good. Justice cannot be achieved unless the rules governing the democratic process are just and fair to all. The present system gives the appearance that elected officials are willing to sell their values and votes, as well as the integrity of their offices, for the sake of campaign contributions. This system of perceived bribery promotes public cynicism and threatens our democracy.

Public support for campaign finance reform has been documented time and time again. In fact, nearly ten campaign finance reform ballot initiatives have been voted on in various states recently, *and every single one has passed!* These acts of direct democracy—coupled with last year's House vote in favor of Shays-Meehan—clearly show the public's desire to overhaul the current system.

By supporting the Discharge Petition, you will be taking a small but nonetheless important step toward the necessary reform that the American people desire—and deserve. We hope that you will sign the petition and support Shays-Meehan when it reaches the floor.

In Faith,

Church Women United
Disciples Advocacy Washington Network
Equal Partners in Faith
The Episcopal Church
The Interfaith Alliance
Mennonite Central Committee, US Washington
Office
National Council of Churches of Christ in the
U.S.A.

NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice
Lobby
Presbyterian Church (USA) Washington Office
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
Unitarian Universalist Association of
Congregations
United Church of Christ
United Methodist Church, General Board of
Church and Society

Religious Leaders who have supported Shays-Meehan or McCain-Feingold in 2001

HEADS OF NATIONAL RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS AND FAITH GROUPS:

The Rev. H. George Anderson, Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Sister Judy Cannon, RSM, Associate Director, Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Bishop Dimitrios Couchell, Ecumenical Officer, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

The Rev. Dr. Bob Edgar, General Secretary, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA

Father Stan DeBoe, Justice & Peace Director, Conference of Major Superiors of Men

The Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, General Secretary, Reformed Church in America

The Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy, Executive Director, The Interfaith Alliance

The Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold, Presiding Bishop and Primate, Episcopal Church, USA

The Rev. Dr. Richard L. Hamm, General Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada

The Very Rev. Arthur M. Johnson, SA, Minister General, Franciscan Friars of the Atonement

Mary Ellen McNish, General Secretary, American Friends Service Committee

The Rev. Judith Mills Reimer, Executive Director, Church of the Brethren General Board

Metropolitan Philip Saliba, Primate, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

The Rev. Dr. Robert E. Sawyer, President, Moravian Church in America, Southern Province

The Rev. Dr. William L. Shaw, President, National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.

The Rev. William G. Sinkford, President, Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

Nancy Small, National Coordinator, Pax Christi USA

Bishop Paul A. Stewart, Sr., Ecumenical Officer, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

Bishop Melvin G. Talbert, Ecumenical Officer, Council of Bishops, United Methodist Church

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus, Diocesan Bishop, Mar Thoma Church

The Rev. John Thomas, President, United Church of Christ

Sister Kathy Thornton, RSM, National Coordinator, NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

Rabbi Eric Yoffie, President, Union of American Hebrew Congregations