



Common Cause Program Agenda: 2009-2010

Campaign Finance Reform

- **Modernize the Presidential Public Financing System**
 - Enact a revised version of the Feingold-Collins bill that puts small donors front and center and enables candidates to run vigorous campaigns. Candidates who agree to much lower contribution limits from individuals only would receive a multiple match on those donations in the primary; a more generous grant in the general; and be allowed to continue raising small contributions throughout the election cycle.
 - Common Cause played a lead role in the creation of this system and the updates to it since the early 1970s.
- **Pass Congressional Public Financing Legislation**
 - Similar to the above, based largely on the Fair Elections Now Act (S.1285), introduced by Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA): a system in which small donations are amplified by limited public funds for qualified candidates who agree to contribution limits and take no lobbyist money.
 - The dominance of large donors and special interests in Congress has grown steadily; systems of comprehensive public financing in the states of Maine, Arizona and Connecticut are thriving. Changing the way we pay for federal races is a *high* priority.

Election Reform

- **Pass Anti-Deceptive Practices Legislation**
 - Federal regulation and penalties for deceptive practices, both online and offline.
- **Enact Universal Voter Registration**
 - Reach goal of 100 percent voter registration through an automatic registration process.
- **Mandate Voting Machines that can be Audited**
 - Voting machines must use or produce a paper ballot that can be verified and audited; states must conduct random audits of voting machines and systems.
- **Establish Voting Rights for the District of Columbia**
 - Full voting representation in the U.S. House for the District's 600,000 residents.
- **Pass National Popular Vote Bills in Several States**
 - Continue building state-by-state participation in the compact that requires states to award electoral votes to the winner of national popular vote once the participating states total at least 270 electoral votes.

Media Reform

- **Enact Net Neutrality**
 - Guarantee of a free and open internet in which users can access any web content they want, post their own content, and use any applications they choose, without restrictions or limitations imposed by their Internet service providers (ISPs).
- **Improve Media Ownership Rules**
 - Prevent further media consolidation via a new FCC rule on media-cross ownership and an overhaul to the 1996 Telecommunications Act that promotes diversity and true competition.



- **Increase Public Interest Obligations & Improve Public Affairs Programming**
 - Create guidelines for public-affairs programming, similar to those for children's programs, with a clear definition of what qualifies, a minimum of three hours per week, and a minimum number of locally produced public service announcements. Revert broadcaster license terms from eight back to three years and create new standards for license renewal so communities can hold broadcasters to their public interest obligations more effectively.
- **Create a National Broadband Strategy**
 - Create a high level task force to establish a National Broadband Strategy for the United States that will allow us to expand broadband reach into all communities and increase average speeds while decreasing costs of access. A key element of this should be encouraging community broadband systems. This will increase American business' competitiveness globally, help break the digital divide and allow for greater citizen participation in our democracy.
- **Expand Low Power FM**
 - Expand the Low Power FM Radio program by making more LPFM licenses available in urban and rural communities all over the country.

Ethics

- **Implement an Independent Ethics Office for the Senate**
 - Companion to the House Office of Congressional Ethics providing some non-member oversight and enforcement of Senate ethics rules.
- **Pass Electronic Filing for Senate Financial Disclosures Legislation**
 - Save taxpayer money, speed processing, increase transparency by bringing Senate campaigns into line with House and presidential campaign reporting.
- **Pass Whistleblower Protection**
 - Pass legislation to do much more to protect federal employees who identify wrong-doing, ethical lapses, and inefficiencies in federal agencies.
- **End No-Bid Contracts and Other Egregious Military Contracting Abuses**
 - Common Cause helped pass the Webb/McCaskill Military Contracts Commission that will investigate contracting abuses and report to the Congress. We want to follow this and make sure taxpayer dollars are not being wasted, no "war profiteering" occurs and contract terms are fulfilled.

Abuse of Power

- **Establish a Commission to Investigate Past Rule of Law Abuses and Possible Prosecutions**
 - We cannot move forward if we do not know the extent to which past administrations violated the rule of law and defied the Constitution. Therefore, we need to investigate to determine what happened, how we can hold individuals accountable, and how we make sure the abuses do not happen again.
- **Reverse the Impact of Signing Statements**
 - Hundreds of President Bush's signing statements must be rendered null and void, through legislation or other means.
- **Establish a Human Rights Commission**
 - The torture issue has called into question whether the U.S. is abiding by international and domestic laws regarding prisoner detention. A special group of Members of Congress must oversee U.S. behavior and report to Congress and the American people whether or not we are acting lawfully.
- **Modify State Secrets Privilege**
 - The state secrets privilege has been abused by the Bush administration, and Congress must pass legislation to allow a judge to determine when the privilege is appropriate.