



2024 Issue Paper: Money in Politics

Position Statements

The League of Women Voters of Washington, as stated in its *Program in Action*, believes that:

- The funding level of the PDC [Public Disclosure Commission] should provide for sufficient staff to audit all appropriate reports including those of lobbyists. Public education should be a funded function of the PDC. (CF-1)
- Campaign contributions should be limited. These limits should apply to both in-state and out-of-state contributions. The PDC should implement laws pertaining to these limitations. (CF-2)
- The length of political campaigns should be shortened. (CF-3)
- Regular and full disclosure of campaign finances for both ballot issues and candidates is necessary before primary and general elections. (CF-4/EL-4)

The LWV of the United States, as stated in its *Impact on Issues* supports:

- Public financing of elections, either voluntary or mandatory, in which candidates must abide by reasonable spending limits. Until full public financing of elections is enacted, limits on election spending are needed to protect democratic processes.
- Enhanced enforcement of campaign finance laws that includes changes to ensure that regulatory agencies are properly funded, staffed, and structured to avoid partisan deadlock in the decision-making process.
- Abolishing Super PACs (independent expenditure political action committees) and abolishing spending coordinated or directed by candidates (other than a candidate's own campaign committee.)
- Restrictions on direct donations and bundling by lobbyists, which may include monetary limits as well as other regulations.

Summary of Issues for the 2024 Legislative Session

The LWVWA Democracy lobby team is working in coalition with [People Powered Elections WA](#) on this priority legislation.

Public financing of campaigns

Because of the high expense of campaigns, the possibility of running for office is often out of reach for someone who does not have significant personal wealth or access to those who do. It also makes it extremely difficult for a candidate to not accept corporate donations. An alternative to the situation is to provide some public funds through expanding the successful Seattle Democracy Voucher program to candidates for state legislature. This would empower more voters to contribute small amounts to candidates who have demonstrated community support and agree to limit fundraising from other sources. View the October 2023 [House State](#)

[Government & Tribal Relations - TVW](#) work session. The Democracy Voucher section starts at 1:02:07

Banning Foreign-Influenced Corporations from Contributing and Spending in our Elections

This bill would end foreign-influenced corporate spending in elections, protect the basic principle of democratic self-government, and improve trust in our elections. Foreign investors are already prohibited from spending money directly or indirectly to influence U.S. elections, including state and local elections. Multinational corporations with significant foreign investment currently spend unlimited corporate funds to influence our elections, with the exception of Seattle, which became the first jurisdiction to end foreign-influenced corporate spending in January 2020.

Closing the Loophole to stop LLC's from Exceeding Contribution limits

This would require limited liability corporations to declare a business purpose other than making campaign contributions.

Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) Requested Legislation

The PDC makes campaign finance data accessible to the public and enforces campaign finance regulations. The League supported the 1972 ballot initiative creating the PDC. The LWVWA supports the following legislation proposed by the PDC.

- Adjusting campaign reporting schedule
Requiring a single additional report of expenditure activity during the critical weeks leading up to voting would provide more timely information to the public when people are making decisions and casting ballots. The current expenditure reporting schedule, established prior to mail-in ballots, is oriented to a single Election Day.
- Requiring sponsors to identify political advertising
Improving sponsor reporting of digital advertising expenditure details to commercial advertisers to provide greater transparency to the public in tracking the content, location, scope, and distribution of digital advertising.

Issue Chair: Cindy Madigan, 360-305-7951, cmadigan@lwvwa.org