



## WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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### **LEGISLATORS TO INTRODUCE SWEEPING CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM**

#### ***100% public financing bill will clean up campaigns***

Madison – The most comprehensive campaign finance reform measure to date will be re-introduced by State Representative Mark Pocan (D-Madison) and State Senators Fred Risser (D-Madison). The Clean Elections Fund would provide full public funding of state elections, patterned after laws in Maine and Arizona.

“The record amounts of money spent in the recent legislative races are yet another reminder that the votes of many elected officials are for sale to the highest bidder,” said Pocan. “Our bill is a bold comprehensive electoral reform measure that has proven to work in other states, and it will have a major impact on restoring Wisconsin’s reputation as the state of Fighting Bob La Follette.”

The bill creates a Clean Elections Fund that provides 100 percent public financing for state political campaigns for the State Assembly, Senate, and other state elections including the governor’s office. A candidate must get a certain number of small \$5.00 donations from district residents to qualify for funding. Once approved, they receive a spending limit and amount for their campaign.

As a disincentive for excessive campaign spending, if someone who runs “clean” has an opponent who spends more, the “clean” candidate receives dollar for dollar up to 2.5 times the original grant. The incentive to keep spending down also applies to “independent” expenditures and “issue” ads on behalf of candidates. These groups spent millions last fall on state races.

“Politics has changed a lot since I’ve been in the legislature,” said Risser. “Decisions are now made based on big money rather than big ideas. We need to restore our clean reputation.”

Based on implementation of 100% public funding, the legislators argue a Clean Campaign Fund opens up the political process for new candidates who otherwise wouldn’t have the resources to run for office.

“We must level the playing field in politics,” said Pocan. “I look forward to the day that a six-figure-a-year lobbyist and a minimum wage earner have the same influence on our government.”

The bill, which would off-set special interest spending in campaigns, is being introduced on the heels of a campaign season that saw record spending in some State Assembly races approaching a half million dollars and State Senate races of more than \$1,000,000.