

Sen. Larson: Democrats Call for Campaign Integrity to be Restored in State Budget

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MADISON - The following is a statement from Senator Chris Larson regarding the Senate GOP rejecting a common sense Campaign Integrity amendment to the 2017-19 state budget:

“Wisconsin was once a state admired for tough campaign finance laws that protected both our public voice and the integrity of our political process. Those protections have been dangerously eroded as campaign finance laws have been repealed. This can clearly be seen by the campaign spending increase in Wisconsin from \$16,930,606 in 2014 to a staggering \$28,086,673 in 2016.

“It is our right as citizens to have a strong voice in a healthy democracy and not to be silenced and buried by the bags of corporate special interest money being dumped into Wisconsin campaigns. As shown by the 105 communities across the state voting in favor of referendums across Wisconsin in recent years, Wisconsinites from Caledonia to Monona agree that the current system is not respecting citizens’ rights and votes. Changes need to be made to reduce the influence of millionaires and big, corporate spenders on politicians and our political system as a whole.

“Despite broad public concern and advocacy regarding this issue, the party in control has done the opposite and greedily passed legislation that weakened campaign disclosure laws, increased campaign contribution limits, and allowed candidates to coordinate with special interest groups that keep their donors secret.

“Continuing to let powerful special interest groups and wealthy corporations have a financial stranglehold on Wisconsin elections is a betrayal of our shared values, and jeopardizes our democracy. The Campaign Integrity amendment would have restored our neighbors’ faith in our democracy and promote fairness in our campaign finance rules, but was rejected by the Senate GOP.

“Wisconsin deserves better.”