



Resolution to Reduce the Influence of Money in our Elections

Sponsors: Nancy Morgan, Denny Phipps, Kathy Burns, Susan Flinn, April Breslaw, Rosemary Sullivan, and Kathleen Barnett

Whereas polling by the [PEW Research Center](#) reveals that there is erosion of confidence in Americans' belief that the government works for all, while [CBS polling](#) further indicates that among the 72% of citizens who feel that democracy is under threat, 86% of them attribute that to the influence of money in politics;

Whereas, election spending has skyrocketed since the Supreme Court's 2010 *Citizens United* ruling which opened the door to dark money spending on elections, leading to a [projection of spending in 2024](#) on federal elections of almost \$20 billion, up four-fold since 2010;

Whereas, spending in Virginia elections, due to the lack of limits on campaign donations, jumped exponentially over the same period, from \$68 million in 2010 to an estimated \$188 million in 2023; Virginia has the dubious honor of having held the second most expensive election in the country, after Illinois;

Whereas, Virginia, because of its weak laws on campaign finance and ethics, is ranked 46 out of 50 in the [Coalition for Integrity's S.W.A.M.P Index](#), yet, in the last General Assembly, every single campaign finance bill was killed;

Whereas, [2021 polling by](#) Christopher Newport University's [Wason Center](#) revealed that: 1) 4 out of 5 Virginians, irrespective of party, believe that large donors have too much influence on our elections; 2) nearly 90% want total disclosure of campaign donations; and 3) a majority support an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would allow Congress and the states to regulate election spending;

Whereas, the influence of money in politics is considered the root cause of a government that is often unresponsive to the people and presents a serious direct threat to our nation's representative democracy;

Therefore, be it resolved that the members of the Alexandria Democratic Committee, recognizing that the lack of transparency and restrictions on election spending undermines good government, request that all elected officials representing Alexandria support comprehensive campaign finance reform, both in Virginia and federally. We specifically:

- 1) Commend Representative Don Beyer, as well as Representatives Spanberger, Wexton, McClellan, Scott, and Connolly for co-sponsoring House Joint Resolution 13 ([HJR13](#)) seeking an amendment to the U.S. Constitution relating to contributions and expenditures intended to affect elections.
- 2) Call upon all legislators in the Virginia General Assembly to pass campaign finance bills that limit campaign contributions, ban donations from public service corporations, improve disclosure of donors, restrict personal use of contributions and allow localities to implement public financing of elections.
- 3) Urge the Virginia General Assembly to join 21 other states which have endorsed an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to reverse *Citizens United* which explicitly states that: (a) corporations are not entitled to the constitutional protections or "rights" of natural persons, and that (b) money is not speech.
- 4) Ask the Alexandria City Council to include language supporting campaign finance reform in the next annual legislative priorities package. This language should call for state and national campaign finance reform, thus reaffirming Virginia's commitment of a government for and by the people.