2014’s Campaign Finance Reform and Money in Politics Questions for Townhall Meetings

Questions for U.S. House / U.S. Senate Candidates:

Do you support or oppose an amendment to the U.S. constitution to reverse the Supreme Court’s Citizens United decision?

Would you support a “Stand By Your Ad” law, requiring CEOs to appear in the campaign ads funded by their corporations or to require that ads display the names of donors?

Do you support or oppose legislation, like the Disclose Act, requiring special interests to reveal their political spending?

What is your position on the Government By the People Act or legislation that proposes a system of “Voter-Owned Elections”, small dollar donations that are matched by a public grant?

Will you support or oppose the Democracy for All Amendment, which will reverse Supreme Court decisions like Citizens United that has expanded the influence of corporations and wealthy donors’ significant influence in our elections?

Question for Appellate Court Judicial candidates (Supreme Ct, Ct of Appeals):

Until 2013, North Carolina had a law allowing statewide judicial candidates and some Council of State candidates to qualify for public campaign funding or “Voter-Owned Elections” - if they refuse special interest funds, adhere to spending limits, and prove their grassroots support by obtaining a large number of small contributions from N.C. voters. 80% of candidates used this program in N.C. from 2004-2012.

Do you think this was a good program that should have remained for candidates like yourself?

In the 2012 Massachusetts Senate race and elsewhere, opposing candidates are making a “People’s Pledge” stating that they do not want outside spending engaged in their race.

Would you be interested in agreeing to something like a “People’s Pledge” with your opponent to dissuade outside spending from engaging in your race?

Questions for NC Legislative Candidates and Council of State Candidates:

I. Voter Owned Elections

Until 2013, North Carolina had a law allowing statewide judicial candidates and some Council of State candidates to qualify for public campaign funding or 'Voter-Owned Elections' - if they refuse special interest funds, adhere to spending limits, and prove their grassroots support by
obtaining a large number of small contributions from N.C. voters. 80% of candidates used this program in N.C. from 2004-2012.

Will you vote to implement a new Judicial “Voter-Owned Elections” public campaign funding law?

Will you support local authorizing legislation that would allow N.C. towns and cities to experiment with local public campaign financing if they choose to do so?

II. Rising Cost of Elections

The average cost of winning most competitive legislative races in North Carolina is now well over $100,000. The rising cost of campaigns in North Carolina serves as a barrier to qualified, good candidates who want to run for office.

Are you concerned about the rising cost of elections?

Would you support the creation of a “Voter-Owned Elections” public financing option for state legislative races that would provide candidates with an alternative to candidates spending most of their campaign raising money?

III. Citizens United Constitutional Amendment

The Citizens United decision has increased the amount of money flooding into our elections. A constitutional amendment offers a long-term solution to address the effects of treating corporations with the same rights to express themselves as people.

Would you support a resolution supporting an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to reverse the Citizens United Supreme Court decision by clarifying that corporations and unions do not have the same rights as people and that purchased speech is not the same as free speech?

VI. Disclosure

One way to mitigate Citizens United is to increase disclosure. We believe that all corporate political donations should be made public. Corporations and unions should have to create separate campaign accounts and report every dime they spend in a timely manner.

Will you support increased disclosure of political spending?

VII. Redistricting

If elected, will you actively work to establish an independent, nonpartisan system for drawing legislative and congressional districts?
Question for City / County Candidates:

With the costs of campaigns rising rapidly, it has become increasingly difficult for citizens who don’t have personal wealth or wealthy donors to compete. The need to raise large sums of campaign money creates barriers that limit access for many highly-qualified candidates.

If elected, would you support passage of a state law that would give North Carolina counties and cities the authority to create local “Voter-Owned Elections” or public financing programs for local candidates, as an alternative to the current privately financed campaign finance system?