

## **ACTION Kit: Money in Politics**



### **Money in Politics: You Have a Right to Know.**

YOU have a right to know WHO is running for office, WHO is raising money for WHICH candidates, HOW MUCH money are they raising, and HOW that money is being spent. YOU have a right to elections that are free from corruption and undue influence. CANDIDATES have a right to a fair and equitable contest that promotes strong citizen participation. WE ALL have a right to a democracy that works for all. Reform starts at home! Dive into how your community and state regulates money in politics and then advocate for reforms where needed. We're here to help! Use the ACTION Kit to get you started.

### **People have the Passion...LWV has the ACTION!**

- This ACTION Kit is a practical guide to transform your passion into action.
- New to activism or a seasoned activist, this ACTION Kit will help you develop your plan.
- Informed by the [League of Women Voters positions](#) and [decades of activism](#).

### **Talk About It! Here are questions to get you started.**

- Why is money in politics a priority to you?
- What is your primary concern with money in politics right now?
- What specific stories can you share? How have you seen money in politics influence democracy?

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- What is the first thing you want to work on to improve elections and the money that influences them?
  - What is one thing you can do now to make a difference?

*Ask these questions, or create your own questions that are more relevant to your location and audience.*

## **Change It! Here's what YOU can do at the Local and State levels.**

### **Only have 5 minutes to take ACTION? We've got something for you!**

- [Join the League of Women Voters](#), if you're not a member already.
- Become an e-activist. [Sign up for the League's Action Alerts](#) and share them with friends and family.
- [Donate to the League of Women Voters](#). Support activists like you, who are also helping to make democracy work for all.
- [Join an online discussion group](#) to learn what others are doing.
- Use [#FightBigMoney](#) and [#LWV](#) when sharing posts on social media. Tell your friends to join the conversation.
- Instagram. Take and post pictures of your events and meetings.
- Facebook Live. Bring more to the conversation and encourage active participation.

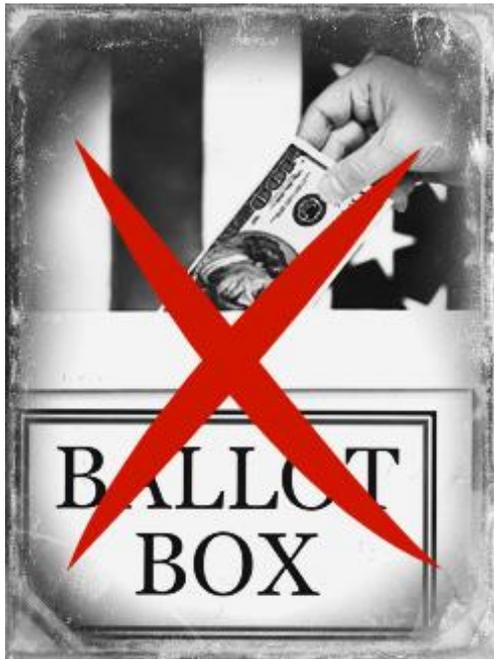
### **In 10 minutes, you can do something great!**

- Write a Letter to the Editor or Op-ed for your local newspaper. See attachment in this kit for a template letter to get you started!
- Contact your local and state representatives. Contact your [U.S. Senators](#) and [U.S. Representative](#) and tell them to reform money in politics. Pick up the phone and give them a call. Tell your friends to call, too.
- Ask the candidates on Facebook, on Twitter, in the newspaper, at candidate forums, or town hall meetings about their experience fundraising and what they plan to do to make elections more equitable.
- Start a blog and continue to research and ask questions.

### **With 30 or more minutes, you will be a defender of democracy!**

- Make a point to create a personal relationship with your officeholders. Ask for their personal email address.
- Explore how money in politics is [regulated in your state and local community](#).





- Share your officeholder's district office phone number publicly and ask your audience to call to share their concerns about the barriers to running for office and the need for democratic reform.
- Go to a town hall meeting, invite your friends to join you, and ask officeholders what they will do to decrease the barriers to running for office.
- Attend a local League forum or meeting.
- Host a house party to bring friends together to talk about money in politics. Then ask for friends to host future house parties.

### **In a GROUP, You have more Power. Here's what you can do with more.**

#### **It takes less than an hour to make a Big Impact!**

- Get to know other activists like yourself. Find other groups in your community to partner with. More people power!
- When hosting events with your group, start with a "pop" quiz! See how much your group knows about campaign finance, and then discuss the responses.
- Start a book group with 'money in politics' as the theme. Use #FightBigMoney and #LWV on Twitter and Facebook to keep the conversation going.
- Start a discussion group using Facebook, Eventbrite.com, or Meetup.com. Use our discussion questions on page one, in the "Talk about it" section above, to get the conversation started.

#### **Have a Few days to plan? Stretch your advocacy muscle.**

- Host a Q&A table at a public event.
- Work with your group to engage candidates and/or elected representatives on Facebook, Twitter, and email. Tell them why money in politics is a priority. To join the others like you online, use #FightBigMoney and #LWV when posting on Twitter and Facebook.
- Start a petition—traditional and/or electronic petition. \*Make sure you review your state's regulations when starting a petition campaign.
- Interview candidates—former and current—about their experience with fundraising. Afterwards, discuss the results with your local League or discussion group to determine how to encourage candidates to run more equitably financed campaigns.
- Organize a field trip! Invite your officeholder(s) and/or their staff member(s) to visit your community to learn about the barriers to running for office.
- Organize a day with friends and/or family and coordinate a calling party. Using the "reform options" listed on the fourth page of this ACTION Kit, tell your elected officials what you want to see change.
- Host a letter writing campaign aimed at elected representatives letting them know how money in politics and democracy reform is a priority to you. Use our discussion questions on page one, in the

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“Talk about it” section above, to get your group primed for writing.

- Schedule a series of meetings with your candidates and/or elected representatives—local, state, and national. See the attached sample questions for you to ask your representatives.
- Host a forum and invite public financing experts and elected representatives. Consider inviting opposing views to add depth and thoughtfulness to the conversation.
- Invite your elected officials and community organizers, neighbors and friends to a town hall meeting organized by your group. Have questions about democracy reform ready for the event.

### **Start Here to Learn More!**

- Research regulations in your state. Here’s a [template to get you started](#).
- Unsure what reforms to advocate for? Start with [policies that make a big impact](#): public financing of elections, effective enforcement of existing regulations, full disclosure of funds, and eliminating coordination between outside groups, candidates and parties.
- Read [issue papers](#) we’ve compiled and [our national position](#).
- Develop your plan with the [League’s Advocacy 101 materials](#).

*For more information about money in politics and campaign finance reform, check out the [League of Women Voters website](#).*

### **Options for Reforming Money in Politics. Start with an ACTION list.**

- Legislative Approaches:
  - Disclose sources of contributions and expenditures (Congress and states).
  - Tighten rules governing coordination by Super PACs (Congress and states).
  - Adopt public funding for all candidates (Congress and states).
  - Prohibit members of Congress from fundraising the interests they most directly regulate (Congress).
  - Change the makeup of the U.S. Supreme Court by including more justices friendly to reform (Congress and/or the President).
  - Use or expand state corporate law (states).
- Regulatory Approaches:
  - Enforce campaign finance laws.
  - Adopt a Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) rule governing corporate political expenditures (SEC or Congress).
  - Strengthen and enforce 501(c)(4) political activity rules (Internal Revenue Service (IRS))
- Other Approaches:
  - Pass state laws that plug loopholes or continue to challenge *Buckley* and/or *Citizens United* rulings Supreme Court decisions.
  - Work for or with Congress members who are committed to reform.
  - Amend the U.S. Constitution to overturn rulings (Congress and states).

*All supporting materials can be found by visiting [form.lwv.org](http://form.lwv.org) or by clicking on the [blue text](#) above.*

