

★ LEGISLATIVE ACTION ★

Your support helped advance major national legislation this year. Here are a few examples of how your involvement and contributions are shaping our democracy.

We the People Democracy Reform Act — would create a small-donor matching fund system to empower small donors in congressional and presidential elections. It would also establish independent redistricting commissions, provide more transparency of money that lobbyists spend to influence government, and slow the revolving door between Capitol Hill and big business.

Weekend Voting Act — would switch the date of federal elections to the first Saturday and Sunday in November to better enable all eligible Americans to have their voices heard at the ballot box.

Redistricting Reform Act — would require states to create independent redistricting commissions to ensure that politicians can't rig the system by cherry-picking their voters.

The Special Counsel Independence Protection Act and the **Special Counsel Integrity Act** — would protect the independence and integrity of "special counsel" investigations from political interference by the president of the United States, including Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into President Trump's campaign and any ties to Russian interference.

Supreme Court Ethics Act — would require Supreme Court justices to be bound by a judicial code of ethics, similar to what applies to all other U.S. federal judges.

EDIT Act — would require the Library of Congress to ensure that all versions of a bill can be seen in "track changes" mode on the Congress.gov website so viewers can see changes made to a bill during the legislative process, which is what 49 of 50 states currently do with state legislation.



2017 YEAR-END REPORT

This has been a year unlike any other — for our country and for Common Cause.

Last year's election ushered in a new era of corruption, cronyism, and conflicts of interest.

Our president believes he is above the law. And Congress has done little to hold him accountable. Meanwhile, our electoral process is under attack from a foreign power. And the media, who we all rely on to expose wrongdoing, is increasingly controlled by an elite few who are shaping the news to serve their purposes.

But Common Cause is fighting back. And with more than 1 million members and activists, our voice has never been louder.

★ YOUR ACTION ★



Your voice is powerful. And with more than 1 million members and activists, Common Cause has been making a lot of noise in 2017.

VOICING OPPOSITION TO SESSIONS

Common Cause activists around the country teamed up to deliver 600,000 petitions to tell key senators to vote against Jeff Sessions' confirmation because of his history fighting against the very laws he would be charged with enforcing as attorney general of the United States. Senator Sessions' history and policy positions on voting rights, civil rights, and much more make clear that he will not uphold a fair and equal rule of law for every American as attorney general.

FIGHTING VOTER SUPPRESSION

Common Cause members filed over **30,000 public comments** about the Pence-Kobach Commission, expressing concerns over its initial data request, supporting the states that protected voter privacy, and making clear to the commission that we will not let it intimidate us out of our right to vote.

STANDING UP TO GERRYMANDERING

Wisconsin members have gathered nearly 4,000 of our target 5,000 signatures in support of redistricting reform legislation, Senate Bill 13/ Assembly Bill 44. We can reach the goal by year's end.

DEMANDING THE TRUTH

Common Cause activists joined with other reform groups to deliver over 300,000 petitions to the Department of Justice to demand an investigation into Donald Trump Jr. and what contact he had with Russian operatives during the 2016 election.

MOBILIZING AND ORGANIZING

Thanks to your help we were able to provide trainings for activists on election security issues and local voting rights actions, and created a "rapid response" team of activists to make a nationwide coordinated response if President Trump fires Special Counsel Muller. Our state-specific activities included the state-based campaigns that are part of the Common Cause People's Lobby (peopleslobby.cc), a new tool for activists in all 50 states.

★ LEGAL ACTION ★

When the law is not upheld and the public needs an advocate, it's time for Common Cause to head to court. Here are some of the key cases your support helped launch this year.

Common Cause v. Kellyanne Conway:

On February 9, 2017, Common Cause filed a complaint with the U.S. Office of Government Ethics against Kellyanne Conway, counselor to President Donald J. Trump, alleging violation of federal ethics regulations prohibiting government employees from using their public office to endorse products and businesses. Conway appeared on the *Fox & Friends* television show from the White House press briefing room and told viewers to buy Ivanka Trump's product line.

Common Cause v. Donald J. Trump for President:

On March 2, 2017, Common Cause filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission against President Trump's campaign committee alleging the campaign committee violated federal law by accepting campaign contributions after Election Day and falsely reporting those contributions for "debt retirement" even though no debt existed — when the law required the contributions to count toward donors' limits for the 2020 election.

Common Cause v. U.S. Department of State:

On April 25, 2017, Common Cause filed a complaint with the U.S. Office of Government Ethics against the U.S. Department of State alleging violation of federal ethics regulations prohibiting government employees from using their public office to endorse products and businesses. A State Department website had

published an article promoting President Trump's Mar-a-Lago private club and resort, which was then republished by multiple U.S. embassies.

Common Cause v. Governor Rick Scott:

On June 14, 2017, Common Cause filed a petition for a *writ of quo warranto* in the Supreme Court of Florida seeking an order from the court to prevent Governor Rick Scott from filling vacancies on the Supreme Court of Florida on his way out of office in January 2019.

Common Cause v. Donald Trump Jr. et al.:

On July 10, 2017 Common Cause filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission and the U.S. Department of Justice against Donald Trump Jr. and President Trump's campaign committee alleging that Trump Jr. had violated federal law by soliciting a political contribution from a foreign national in a June 2016 meeting with a Russian lawyer.

Common Cause v. Kid Rock:

On September 1, 2017, Common Cause filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission and the U.S. Department of Justice against Robert James Ritchie (aka Kid Rock) alleging that Kid Rock violated federal law by engaging in candidate activities (*e.g.*, selling "Kid Rock for Senate" clothing and yard signs) without complying with candidate contribution limits and disclosure requirements.



★ LOCAL ACTION ★

Common Cause is fighting in statehouses across the country to deliver open, honest, and accountable government. Here are some of the state-level actions that your support helped move forward this year.

HAWAII: Common Cause supported an open government campaign that resulted in victory in late June, when the governor signed HB165, the first major update to Hawaii's Sunshine Law in 20 years.

ILLINOIS: Automatic Voter Registration: On August 28, Illinois became just the 10th state to implement automatic voter registration (AVR) when Gov. Rauner signed our bill into law.

INDIANA: Our lawsuit against the Marion County Election Board for its refusal to offer early, in-person voting at satellite locations is proceeding. A settlement conference has been held and the board has agreed to most of our demands. We hope to resolve this case through a consent decree.

MARYLAND: In a victory for ethics and open government, we advanced a significant update of our Public Information Act (PIA), the Maryland version of the Freedom of Information Act. The law included a mandate that the attorney general review of the 2014 reforms so that we could see what was working well and continue to reform areas where the citizens still did not have necessary transparency.

NEW YORK: Common Cause/NY, is the first named plaintiff in a lawsuit filed by the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and Latino Justice against the New York State Board of Elections for failing to follow the National Voter Registration Act. The suit was filed in September.

OHIO: *Husted v. A. Philip Randolph Institute*: On September 22, 2017, Common Cause filed an *amicus* brief in the U.S. Supreme Court in support of a challenge to Ohio's aggressive voter roll purge program that stripped hundreds of thousands of Ohioans of their right to vote prior to the 2016 election.

OREGON: SB 802, a bill we supported to allow people as young as 16 to preregister to vote, passed and was signed by the governor in late June. This reform is particularly important now that Oregon facilitates automatic voter registration through the Department of Motor Vehicles.

RHODE ISLAND: Our top priority, automatic voter registration passed in the final hour of the regular legislative session on June 30. The legislation received broad, bipartisan support in the legislature, was signed by Gov. Raimondo, and made Rhode Island the first state to pass legislation allowing AVR at state agencies beyond the DMV.

TEXAS: Ethics Reform: In early September, we received a letter from San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg inviting us to be the only organization to be an integral part of their effort to overhaul the San Antonio ethics and campaign finance city codes.

WASHINGTON: *Elster v. City of Seattle*: On September 20, 2017, Common Cause filed an *amicus* brief in Washington state's King County Superior Court in defense of the city's campaign finance voucher program against a challenge that the program violates the constitutional rights of taxpayers who do not want their tax dollars supporting qualified candidates' campaigns.