



# COMMON CAUSE / INDIANA

*Holding Power Accountable*

Winter 2010 )

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## NOW IS THE TIME: CITIZEN PRESSURE KEY TO PASSAGE OF REAL LOBBYING AND REDISTRICTING REFORM

Advocates for better government in Indiana have an unprecedented opportunity to pass significant lobbying and redistricting reform legislation this session. The sudden interest in lobbying reform by House Speaker Pat Bauer has given that issue tremendous momentum. And President Pro Tem David Long's announcement that he will support an independent commission to draw political maps gives us an important and powerful ally in that debate.

And twenty six daily

newspapers across the state have joined together to editorialize in support of lobbying reform which is resulting in an increased amount of local coverage of this important issue.

But, much opposition remains to both these good government reforms and neither the Speaker's proposal for lobbying reform, or the President Pro-tem's proposal on redistricting go far enough. Improving and ultimately passing these bills will take an enormous amount of citizen pressure and your in-

volvement is critical if we are going to be successful.

### Lobbying Reform

HB1001 is the House version of lobbying reform and was the first bill filed – the traditional signal that this bill is the top priority of House leadership this session – a surprising and welcome change. The bill would make some modest improvements to current law, including a one year cooling off period before a legislator

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## The Common Cause Annual "Mr./Ms. Clean" Award

On March 9<sup>th</sup> a legislator will be honored at an 11:30 ceremony in the Statehouse rotunda. Common Cause Indiana needs your legislator nominations to determine the winner of the "Ms./ Mr. Clean" award by February 26, 2010

Nominees should support Common Cause goals. Criteria include



ensuring every vote counts, public financing for campaigns, reducing the power of special interests, holding public

officials accountable and ending the revolving door policy for legislator/lobbyist.

If you want to nominate a legislator, contact CC/IN board member Robin Olds.

[robinolds@comcast.net](mailto:robinolds@comcast.net)  
or 317-291-2276

**Common Cause is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to restoring the core values of American democracy, reinventing an open, honest and accountable government that serves the public interest, and empowering ordinary people to make their voices heard in the political process.**

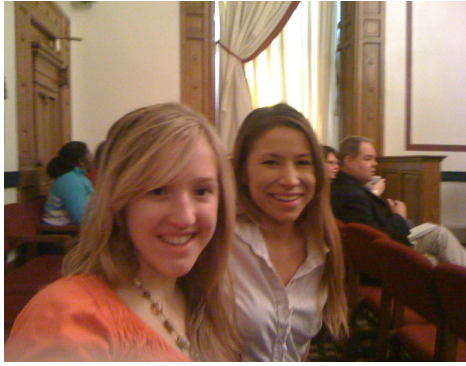
## REAL LOBBYING AND REDISTRICTING REFORM *(continued from pg. 1)*

can become a lobbyist, and lowering the disclosure threshold for the gifts that legislators receive from lobbyists from \$100 to \$50.

On the campaign finance side, HB1001 would prohibit any entity with a state contract worth more than \$100,000 from making a contribution to a state candidate. It would also prohibit the Governor and any candidates for Governor from fundraising during the long session of the General Assembly (legislators are already prohibited from fundraising at this time).

The Senate version of lobbying reform is SB114, sponsored by Senator Pat Miller. It would also create a one year cooling off period before a legislator could become a lobbyist and lower the gift reporting threshold from \$100 to \$50. SB114 would also require state universities to register as lobbyists and report their lobbying expenditures, a measure that is long overdue. The bill would dramatically increase the financial penalties for failure to report lobbying expenditures from \$10/day to \$100/day. And finally, the bill creates a system of lobbying disclosure for local governments in Indiana.

While all of these reforms would be positive changes, they just don't go far enough. Common Cause/IN has been at the State House arguing for a stronger package of lobbying reform that includes a total ban on gifts from lobbyists (to match the current standard for the executive branch in Indiana) and a 2 year cooling off period. In terms of disclosure we are calling for quarterly filings from lobbyists (instead of the current biannual



Democracy Matters at IU Bloomington works with Common Cause/Indiana to activate students in support of good government legislation. In December, 2009, DM Bloomington officers Brianna Dines and Jackie Hogan testified in support of ethics reform before the House Government and Regulatory Reform Committee.

filings), with one filing happening during the legislative session.

While we support a ban on contributions from entities with state contracts, we believe the ultimate solution to the problem of big money in political campaigns is public financing like the systems in Maine and Arizona.

The Miller bill would also make some changes to lobbying disclosure that are not positive, including ending the requirement that legislators report gifts (only lobbyists would) and ending the practice of reporting lobbying expenditures by category. In conversations with Sen. Miller during the committee hearing on the bill, she agreed to remove the language that that would do away with expenditure categories. We are still working on the getting the gift reporting by legislators in the bill.

### **Redistricting Reform**

As of mid-January, two bills were moving in the Senate to reform the way legislative districts are drawn. SB 80, authored by Senator Connie Lawson, would establish a set of map drawing criteria. SB 136 would create a study commission to make

recommendations to the General Assembly regarding the creation of an independent redistricting commission.

Like the lobbying reform bills discussed above, both of these bills would make positive changes but need some improvements to address redistricting reform in time to impact the new maps that will be drawn in 2011.

Common Cause/Indiana and our allies on redistricting reform—the League of Women Voters of Indiana and AARP Indiana—are lobbying for the following changes to SB 80 and SB 136.

-In SB 80 we are working to add language that would prohibit any district being drawn to unduly favor any individual or political party.

-In SB 136 we are working to remove language that would set up a process of amending the Indiana Constitution to put an independent redistricting commission in place. We believe an independent commission can be put in place through legislation and amending the constitution is an unnecessary and time-consuming distraction that could ultimately fail.

We are urging the Senate to use Washington state's independent redistricting commission as a model because we believe it will comply with Indiana's constitutional requirement that the General Assembly be involved in drawing districts.

In Washington, a nonpartisan independent commission draws the district lines and then turns the maps over to the legislature, where they can be tweaked slightly. Any changes made by the legislature cannot affect more than 2% of

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## THE CHALLENGES OF REFORM By Nathan Compton, CC/IN board member

I recently viewed a news program where various political pundits were discussing how the default mode of Congress is to stick with the “status quo” whenever faced with the prospect of meaningful reform. This, of course, was offered up as a way to help explain why action on health-care reform seemed to be deadlocked on that particular day. It’s not difficult to see why the status quo is being defended in this case, when major health care interests have spent hundreds of millions last year lobbying Congress. But while this level of lobbying expenditure is staggering on its own, the methods used to defend the status quo go far beyond lobbying.

This point has been brought home to Indiana by the relationship between Senator Evan Bayh’s family income and health care special interests. Senator Bayh’s wife Susan has built a very lucrative career serving as a board member for corporations which have a strong interest in her husband’s Senate votes. According to a recent article published by the Indianapolis Star, Susan Bayh received compensation of \$2.1 million dollars from 2006 through 2008 to serve on five boards in the healthcare industry alone. This figure includes \$976,000 from Wellpoint – the largest health insurance company in the country. With the current debate surrounding the creation of a public insurance option to compete with private insurers, it’s not difficult to imagine that Wellpoint feels the money paid to Senator Bayh’s family was a sound investment.

This scenario is one illustration of how those who benefit from the status quo look for loopholes that may help them defend it. While we must respect the rights of politicians’ spouses to pursue their own

careers, we must also make clear that we will not accept elected officials who favor their family finances over potential conflicts of interest. To that end, here are some suggestions for how we can hold them accountable:

Support more stringent disclosure requirements – The temptation to engage in questionable conflicts of interest is certainly much stronger when it can be kept hidden from public view. Current Senate disclosure rules allow senators to report their spouse’s income in such vague terms as “over \$1,000”. Elected officials should be required to provide a detailed account of the source and amount of all family income. And this information should be easily accessible by the public through the

official’s website and other printed media.

Support the addition of recusal guidelines to ethics rules – Similar to judicial disqualification, this would establish rules under which an official must abstain from a vote when a conflict of interest in their personal finances exists. This not only reduces doubt about the votes that are being cast, but also removes much of the motivation that special interests have to become involved in the official’s personal finances from the start.

I urge you to contact your senators and representative and ask them to work for these reforms. Thank you for your consideration of these issues and all you do for Common Cause Indiana.

### “Confessions of a former candidate”

I ran for State Representative in 2006. I was a new candidate and my main obstacle was raising money. I was warned about the need for funds, yet I dismissed this advice. I received individual contributions only—I wanted to be a public servant, not a politician. My roadblock was the infamous Political Action Committee (PAC).

A PAC’s goal is to influence legislators to vote for a specific issue. A PAC gives money to candidates and legislators with no limit to the amount of campaign contributions doled out. PAC’s are well funded and a constant fixture in the Statehouse.

I was encouraged to take the PAC money. It is a good source of revenue and I was running against a well-financed incumbent. I was finding it difficult to mount a serious challenge with only individual

contributions (which is often why incumbents are not challenged). But I did not want to be beholden to special interest groups by taking PAC money to win the race.

So I did not take PAC money. I followed my principles: constituents come first, not special interests. I lost the election. I admit money was not the only factor in my race. Another obstacle was the fact that my district map was drawn to ensure a positive result for my opponent. Remember, Democrats and Republicans are both guilty when it comes to gerrymandering district maps.

Competitive elections are dependent upon a level financial playing field as well as realistic borders for legislative districts. My candidacy would have gotten more traction if Indiana offered publicly-funded  
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## **REAL LOBBYING AND REDISTRICTING REFORM** (continued from pg. 2)

the total population (to ensure the legislature doesn't make drastic changes to any proposed districts). The legislature then takes an up or down vote to approve the maps.

We believe this approach will significantly reduce the role that politics play in redistricting and could survive a court challenge on constitutional grounds,

In the event we do not succeed in convincing the Senate to take this approach we will argue for language to ensure that members of a redistricting study committee represent grassroots organizations, minority groups and third parties.

### **What You Can Do**

Ethics and redistricting rarely rise to the top of the General Assembly's agenda. We must seize this rare opportunity for reform and raise our voices loudly in support of reforms that go beyond the modest proposals set forth by the legislative leadership.

Contact your state representative

and state senator immediately with this message:

*I want you to work for lobbying reform that includes a ban on gifts from lobbyists and more frequent and timely reports about what lobbyists are spending. I also support a two year cooling off period and a prohibition on state contractors making campaign contributions. And, state universities should be required to register and report as lobbyists.*

*I also want you to support legislation to create an independent redistricting commission and want redistricting reform in time for the next round of map drawing in 2011.*

Senate Phone: 1-800-382-9467 or 317-232-9400

House of Representatives Phone: 1-800-382-9842 or 317-232-9600

To find you legislator's e-mail address go to [www.in.gov/iga](http://www.in.gov/iga)

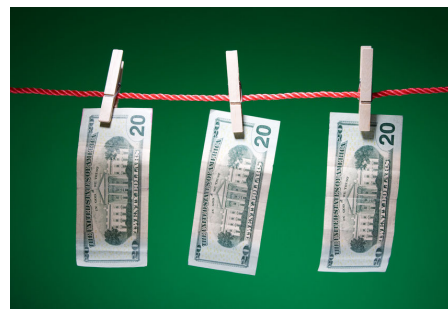
In addition to calling and writing, please take action in these ways as well.

-Write a letter to the editor

-Attend public meetings where your legislators are in attendance, ask them questions about lobbying and redistricting reform. Local groups like the Chamber of Commerce, League of Women Voters and Farm Bureau often host meetings with legislators – check with your local organization to see if the public is invited.

-Come to the State House to lobby in person. Contact CC/IN Policy Director Julia Vaughn for more information, [jvaughn@commoncause.org](mailto:jvaughn@commoncause.org)

Thanks for all you do. With your support we can pass real reform this year.



## **CONFESSIONS** (continued from page 3)

elections like the ones in Maine and Arizona, where successful public financing laws result in more competitive races and higher voter turnout, as well as giving lawmakers more independence from special interests.

In Maine, candidates for state rep receive public funding if they collect \$5 checks from 100 of their constituents. This could work in Indiana at the district level. The program would be voluntary. If a candidate prefers to get their money from special interests groups, they can opt out of public financing.

Money should not be an obstacle to a qualified candidate. In my case, I would have preferred canvassing door to door asking for \$5 dollar contributions instead of "dialing for dollars".

Submitted by Robin Olds  
Former State Representative Candidate  
District 92, Indianapolis

### **Common Cause/IN Needs You!**

We need your financial support—  
100% of our budget comes from  
membership in Indiana.

Send your contribution to:

Common Cause/Indiana

P.O. Box 1603

Indianapolis, IN 46206

Web: [www.commoncause.org/IN/Give](http://www.commoncause.org/IN/Give)

Contact Julia Vaughn at 317-925-5780  
for other ways to help.