

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
February 24, 2015

CONTACT:
Alejandra Moran
(708) 715-6495

Tuesday's Biggest Winner is the Chicago Voter

Ballot Question on Campaign Finance Reform Wins by XX%

Chicago, IL – Among all the prevailing candidates today, the democratic rights of voters were Chicago's biggest winner. XX% of Chicago voters agreed we need a new campaign finance system that limits the corrupt influence of wealthy donors and special interests. This critical victory, led by Common Cause Illinois through its Fair Elections campaign, is a major step to changing every Chicago election for generations to come. Tomorrow, Common Cause Illinois and its partners begin aggressively working to ensure Chicago joins the ranks of other major cities that enacted similar reforms in the face of *Citizens United's* negative impact on American politics.

"Special interests may think they can buy Chicago elections, but they could not stop Chicago voters from standing up for their democratic rights," said Rey Lopez-Calderon, Executive Director Common Cause Illinois. "This victory sends a powerful message to Congress and the State Legislature. The people will no longer stand for a corrupt system that only allows candidates backed by the rich and powerful to win elections."

The winning ballot question called for a campaign financing system that shuts out the corrupt influence of large donors that this year constituted 86% of the money contributed to the five mayoral candidates. It asked voters whether they wanted a system like NYC's and LA's that relies on small donors and a limited match of public funds, ensuring that elections more fairly represent the people in our Chicago communities.

"Everyone knows that campaigns have become far too expensive, and a small donor-backed campaign finance system is an important way we will begin to change that," continued Lopez-Calderon. "With this system, the voters – not Super PACs and fat cats – will decide who's best to lead our city. And as a result, we're going to have better candidates and better government."

Common Cause Illinois and its partner organizations across the nation have been working on multiple fronts to stop the influence of big money in elections, including pressuring state and federal lawmakers to overturn the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* ruling. Armed with mandate from voters, a team of scholars and public officials will immediately begin crafting legislation to implement the small donor financing system.

In addition to successfully placing an advisory ballot question on the city's ballot, the Common Cause Illinois has garnered [endorsements](#) from all five mayoral candidates, several incumbent aldermen, and over a dozen organizations; launched the [Fair Elections Illinois](#) website; passed out post cards on "L" stops, passed out 20,000 door hangers with our partners at Reclaim Chicago, called thousands of people through multiple phone banks, produced a robocall to over 200,000 likely voters; and collaborated with Illinois PIRG to release [this report](#) on campaign donations to the Chicago mayoral race. See attached press clippings.

###