



## **Aurora Campaign Finance Reform – Executive Summary**

Aurora residents deserve a campaign finance system that is transparent and fair. They want a democracy where everyone’s voice is heard and everyone plays by fair and common sense rules. Aurora has an opportunity to adopt best practices that have been implemented in many Colorado municipalities that will bring our campaign finance system into the modern era and make the system work better for all Aurora residents.

To that end, the Democracy for the People Coalition (*CleanSlateNow Action, Colorado Common Cause, Colorado Working Families Party, Indivisible Colorado CD6, DSA Colorado, Our Revolution Metro Denver, and PDA Colorado*) is working with Aurora City Council and other Aurora city officials to improve and modernize Aurora’s outdated campaign finance laws. The new city ordinance, if adopted, makes the following improvements:

### **Establishes New Limits on Campaign Contributions & Use of Campaign Funds**

- **Establishes contribution limits from individuals, committees, and parties** to a campaign committee.
- **Prohibits contributions to candidate committees from business entities** (profit and nonprofit corporations, Limited Liability Companies, etc.) and from labor unions.
- **Small Donor Committees** created, pooling individuals’ contributions of no more than \$50 per year.
- **Prohibitions on contributions** between different committees and conduit contributions so that voters can better understand where campaign contributions are coming from.
- **Prohibits all contributions or expenditures in cash.**

### **Creates Transparency for Campaign Contributions & Expenditures**

- **Campaign finance reports must be more detailed and accurate.** City Clerk will reject improperly prepared filings, then allow for resubmission.
- **All committees’ reporting schedules** in election years increased to 275, 180, 90, 60, 30, and 14 days before an election, the Friday before the election, and 30 days after the election. Reporting schedule in non-election years increased from annual to semi-annual.
  - Recall committees have more stringent reporting schedules.
  - Penalties for late filing increased.
- **New disclosure requirements for “outside” groups that pay for independent expenditures and electioneering communications in Aurora,** including requirements for these groups to identify their big donors on public disclosure reports.
- **Disclaimers required on most political advertising,** and independent expenditure and electioneering communication ads must now list the names of the three largest donors to the sponsor of the advertising.





## Provides for Greater Oversight & Enforcement of City Campaign Finance Law

- **More effective complaint and waiver procedures**, including:
  - Public notice of complaints and advance notice of hearings;
  - Subpoena authority;
  - Testimony under oath;
  - Public records of hearings kept;
  - Council members with conflicts of interest must recuse themselves from decisions;
  - Unpaid fines to be referred to collections;
- **Penalties of up to \$10,000, or three times the amount of the illegal contribution or expenditure**, for intentional campaign finance violations.

## Creates Clear & Comprehensive Definitions of Key Terms

- **Clearly defined terms** comprehensively describe the scope of the city's campaign finance law.
- **“Inactive voter” is defined in a more limited way**, making fewer voters inactive and more active.
- **Removal of “exploratory committees”** and special rules for those entities making the code simpler and easier to understand.

## Conclusion

Our democracy is stronger when we all participate, and this ordinance is no exception. Together we can reform and improve our campaign finance system with laws that amplify the voices of everyday Coloradans, require strong disclosure, improve trust in our elections, and make sure everyone plays by the same common sense rules.

