



Making Democracy Work!

For Immediate Release:
September 21, 2006

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Citizen Groups Outline Five Political Reforms To “Make Democracy Work” in Texas

Austin, TX: Texas citizen and government reform organizations today unveiled a five-point reform agenda designed to ‘Make Democracy Work’ in Texas. The citizen groups say the reforms are needed to strengthen Texas’ campaign finance laws and ensure open and independent government free from the influence and dominance of special interests.

“The integrity of Texas’ political institutions has taken a beating lately. Our leaders need to make political reform a priority. Reforming Democracy isn’t a Republican issue and it isn’t a Democratic issue; it is an issue that affects all Texans regardless of any political affiliations they might hold,” said Craig McDonald, director of Texans for Public Justice. “Democracy can’t work if citizens have no faith in the integrity of its political institutions.”

The list of non-partisan reforms presented by the groups included:

- Place a \$100,000 Aggregate Limit on Individual Contributions;
- Close the Revolving Door between the Legislature and the Lobby;
- Keep Judges Independent by Appointment and Retention Elections;
- Record All Non-Ceremonial Legislative Votes; and,
- Create an Independent Redistricting Commission.

"The people of Texas have a right to demand transparency and accountability in their government," said Mario X. Perez, State Chair of Common Cause Texas. "These proposals represent an important step forward to reform our institutions and maintain trust between the people and State government. Open, clean, government is not a partisan issue. It is a Texas issue."

“Political reform is not a partisan issue,” said Julia Marsden, President Pro Tem of the League of Women Voters of Texas, one of the organizations promoting the five-point reform package. “Our reforms don’t favor or penalize any political party. These reforms benefit all the citizens of Texas regardless of their political persuasion.”

“When there is no accountability, democracy fails. Democracy sometimes fails in Texas because legislators are unwilling to make themselves accountable for their votes on significant issues,” said Weston Ware, retired Public Policy Director of the Christian Life Commission and Volunteer Legislative Director of Texans Against Gambling. “Efforts to secure more straightforward reporting of votes made in the 79th session should now be further strengthened

and brought to the people in the form of a constitutional resolution. Citizens have a right to know how their elected representatives voted on bills brought before the legislature.”

“There has been bi-partisan support in the legislature on nearly all of these reform issues. Regretfully, support for political reform has not been shared by our government’s leaders. We applaud those legislators working for reform and pledge to help them get their reform bills written into law,” said Alison Dieter, Legislative Coordinator of the Gray Panthers of Texas. “Reform needs to be a priority of our top political leaders.”

The organizations plan to promote the Making Democracy Work Reform platform among their members and urge officeholders and candidates to endorse the five reforms.

Organizations promoting the Making Democracy Work reform plan include Common Cause Texas, Gray Panthers of Texas, League of Women Voters of Texas, Public Citizen Texas, Texans for Public Justice and the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission.

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