

Justice NOT for Sale !

Public financing of supreme court campaigns

Advocates' Briefing: What to know – What to do

1. The court matters! The Supreme Court is an important and powerful part of our government. In 2010, three seats are up for election. Special interests may spend lavishly, seeking influence. We must keep the court independent and impartial. How? - with public financing for judicial campaigns!

2. Campaigns cost too much! – candidates risk being "bought" by special interests. In other states (and WA), we see increasing attempts to "buy" the court. Campaigns are costing more and more, and it's coming from special interests.

3. It's time for public financing of supreme court races, in Washington state.

4. Other states have paved the way: North Carolina has had public financing for upper-level courts, since 2002. It works! Candidate fund raising is minimal and restricted – yet they receive sufficient public funds to run a campaign. The court remains independent, impartial - no hint of special interest influence. The people have confidence in the impartiality of the court.

5. We can craft a judicial public financing bill that works -- and that is affordable!

(We know there is economic recession and a restricted state budget in 2009).

This advocacy campaign will require assertive citizen lobbying and action. We must generate public awareness – so there is clamor to keep the courts "Not For Sale!" – and so that lawmakers will feel "safe" voting for a judicial campaigns public financing bill, knowing there is public support.

Remember: We are strong when we're organized as a grassroots movement !

What to do:

1. **Visit the WPC website.** Check it constantly for updates. www.washclean.org
2. **Place articles about this** in organizational newsletters and/or on websites. Link to WPC website.
3. **Distribute literature** at neighborhood meetings - and refer everyone to WPC website
4. **Recruit/appoint a representative** to serve as liaison to our campaign; put them in touch with WPC.
5. **Arrange a presentation by WPC** to your neighborhood association / union/ church group / book club.
6. **Lobby your lawmakers.** Ask them: What will you do to protect the integrity of our courts? *To find your lawmaker: www.leg.wa.gov/legislature*

Key Messages for Lawmakers:

- Justice should never be for sale – and not influenced by campaign contributions.
- We must preserve the independence and integrity of the supreme court.
- Campaigns for supreme court seats should be financed publicly – not by special interests.
- Will you support a modest (affordable) program of public financing for campaigns for state supreme court?