



Six Points – Six Minutes

Six key points you can make in less than ten minutes

Hello – I’ve got bad news and good news:

1. Bad news: Law-making has been for sale, at every level – especially Congress, but also locally (for example, developers seeking zoning favors) and at the state level (in tax policy, etc.).

It’s getting worse and worse. When big donors give big bucks, they expect a huge Return-On-Investment – and they get it, often a thousand-fold. Don’t believe me? Consider pharmaceutical contributions to Congress, which doubled during the years 2000-2002, to both political parties, especially the majority: a windfall for drug makers, but costing us the Medicare Part-D mess. Or consider \$500 hammers, bought by the Pentagon.

Whether you are a conservative or a liberal, **you must care about this.**

We’re losing our government to the grafters, the big-money boys – and it’s costing us dearly.

2. Good news: There is a solution – and it’s so obvious, how could we have overlooked it?

We have to change the *source* of the money that underwrites campaigns – so that instead of coming from deep-pocketed special interests, it comes from we the people – so that *we* own the politicians.

What a concept! Change the source of the campaign cash, so that lawmakers don’t owe their political soul to *any* private special interest. When candidates (or incumbents) don’t have to worry about losing a big campaign donation by offending some special interest, they can instead vote the people’s interest. No more \$500 hammers. No more big tax giveaways. No more special interest legislation.

3. More good news: This is not a pipe dream, it’s real. In Maine, they’ve been doing it for four election cycles. It’s called Clean Elections, or Clean Campaigns. Every year, more candidates and incumbents run Clean – and they win! Today, **eighty-three percent** of the Maine state legislators are elected on Clean Money. In Arizona, even the governor has now been elected on Clean Money – twice. In fact, nine of eleven Arizona state officials were elected last year, running Clean. In North Carolina, most of the upper-level state judges have been elected, having run their campaigns using only public Clean Campaigns funds.

It works! – and in states that have it, it’s popular.

Candidates like it – no more dialing-for-dollars.

Small business likes it, because they are no longer dunned for money at every election cycle.

Political parties and organizing groups (such as unions) like it – instead of wasting precious dollars to “buy” candidates, they have dollars to educate members on issues and encourage them to vote.

The *people* like it, because we get back our voice in government. And – *we* don’t have to keep opening *our* wallets every election cycle!

4. Even more good news: It costs almost nothing! Less than \$4 per year, per person, is all we need in Washington state to publicly-fund campaigns for: (a) all state executive offices, (b) all state legislative races, and (c) all upper-level judicial races (supreme and appellate court). Less than the cost of a coffee mocha – per year!

So don't let anyone tell you that it costs too much, or that it's welfare-for-candidates, or that it diverts money we need to fix potholes. That's poppycock. The truth is: When lawmakers reward today's big campaign donors for their "investment," it costs us more NOT to have voter-owned public campaign financing.

5. Now the challenge: In order to bring this about, we need everyone here to go home and *tell* someone else about this. In fact, tell *ten* people. Almost everyone knows government has been for sale; no one likes it; but hardly anyone knows what to do about it.

Well, *here is what we can do:* *We can break the link between money and votes*, between big donors and government, through public financing of campaigns. Lawmakers should be indebted to us, the voters, not to the moneymen. Elections should not be determined by who hired the best fundraiser. We have to change the system where money shouts so loud, it drowns the voice of ordinary people.

This is how we will get our government back – to restore government “of, by and for the people.”

6. Now I can tell you how the Clean Campaigns program works in Maine and Arizona, and answer your questions. Also, visit our website: washclean.org