

# ALAN HASSENFELD & ARNOLD HIATT

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April 16, 2010

Dear Friend:

We're writing with a very unusual request — that you pledge *not* to give any campaign contributions to any candidate for Congress until they have committed to support public funding for congressional elections.

Here is the reason we are taking this step:

As you probably know, we have both been strong supporters of public funding for many years. As we all can see, the urgency to enact public funding has never been more pressing. The American public is disgusted with Congress. The overwhelming majority believe money buys results in Congress. That cynicism is not going away until our government gives people a reason to believe that it is actually acting on their behalf.

Congress is close to moving on this issue. We're asking you to help us to persuade them. There are more than 140 co-sponsors of the Fair Elections Now Act, introduced by Representatives Larson (D-CT) and Jones (R-NC). This legislation will tilt the balance to small donors instead of large, free our elected officials to be legislators not fund raisers, and stop the steady stream of annoying and demeaning phone calls we all receive from candidates. There is a growing movement of grassroots support from across the political spectrum demanding this change.

All of us have been supporters of congressional campaigns, some of us for many years. However, we believe that it is time for us to unite behind removing the undue influence that large donors like us have. We are therefore launching a Funders Pledge for Citizen Funded Elections. The campaign is a joint effort of three leading campaign finance reform organizations, Change Congress, Common Cause and Public Campaign Action Fund.

Our request is simply this: that you pledge to support only candidates who are committed to passing the Fair Elections Now Act. For incumbents, that means co-sponsoring the bill. For challengers, that means prominently indicating on their website that they support the bill. If a candidate

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does not support Fair Elections, then we ask that you indicate to them the reason you are not contributing to their campaign.

Once we have a critical mass of large contributors who have signed this pledge, the partner organizations will then launch an Internet-based campaign to get others to join as well. A pilot of this program was initiated last year. Very quickly, tens of thousands committed to the pledge. Change-Congress.org's technology will enable us to estimate the value of their pledges, and whom it hits directly. The site will also make it easy for pledgers to lobby Senators and Representatives to join the bill.

You can make your pledge simply by emailing the coalition at: [pledge@change-congress.org](mailto:pledge@change-congress.org). Once you indicate your pledge, Change Congress will calculate its value and provide you with the material you need to politely decline fundraising requests from candidates that don't yet support Fair Elections.

If, 15 months into the Obama Administration, we were looking at a long list of accomplishments, with a long list of probable victories coming — as many of us dreamed last November — then we would not be asking you to take this step. But the picture is not nearly so promising because of the power of private money in the political system.

We have all been part of that system. It is time for us to take the lead to change it. Please sign the pledge and return it to us as soon as possible.

Please feel free to contact Monica Walsh at Change Congress ([monica@change-congress.org](mailto:monica@change-congress.org)) with any questions or suggestions. And do let us know if you have friends and colleagues who might also take the pledge!

Sincerely yours,



Alan Hassenfeld & Arnold Hiatt