



North Carolina Voters for Clean Elections

Increased Accountability and Transparency in Elections

The North Carolina General Assembly has two bills which have passed the state House and are alive in the Senate for consideration in the 2014 short session. Both bills currently reside in the Committee of Rules and Operations in the state Senate.

Disclosure Legislation

- ❖ **House Bill 918** would require the initial filing for outside groups within 48 hours of spending its first \$1,000 and additional reports within two days for every \$5,000 spent or received.
- ❖ **House Bill 919** would require candidates for statewide office, as well as PACs and party committees that donate to statewide candidates, to submit their disclosure reports in an electronic format if their activity exceeded \$5,000 and all other candidate committees if their activity exceeded \$10,000 (only a small number of statewide candidates and committees are now required to file electronically). The bill also provides a safety clause to waive penalties if a delay in filing was the result of software malfunction, Internet outages or natural disasters.

Citizen's Right to Know

Citizens are affected every day by the decisions of their democratically elected representatives and have the right to know – in real time – when a campaign contribution or the access it buys contributed to the introduction of a bill, the tabling of an amendment or a vote on legislation.

Transparency's impact is diminished when information about campaign funding is delayed by weeks or months. A less informed public and less accountable system is unacceptable in the Internet era where information about everything is publicly available everywhere, with the tap of a screen or click on a mouse. Our disclosure laws must reflect modern realities if they are to adequately serve the voter's right to information about who is paying for our elections.

Legislative Talking Points

Bipartisan and New Allies

Disclosure is a bipartisan issue and will bring new allies to the table. Media and opinion leaders from across the political spectrum have been supportive of increased disclosure and improved transparency.

Restore Citizen Confidence in Government. Increased disclosure will create informed accountable citizens, with direct knowledge and less swayed by outside influences. Moreover, disclosure of money in politics has long been endorsed and upheld by the Supreme Court because it is critical tool to inform the electorate, aid in the enforcement of campaign finance laws and is hugely popular with the voting public.

Save the State Money. The McCrory Administration promised to create open and transparent government upon election. Increasing the frequency of disclosure will increase transparency and mandating electronic disclosure will streamline the filing system and save the state money.