

# democracy ADVOCATE



Democracy North Carolina

Spring 2011

## "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen."

— Harry S. Truman

**W**hat a year! 2010 offered up a smorgasbord of action items for anyone committed to democracy.

**Early 2010 found us deeply involved in counting all Carolinians.** Our critical role in increasing North Carolina's participation in the 2010 Census helped ensure NC will receive its share of dollars for government programs from education to children's and senior services. This effort was especially critical and timely as dollars remain tight in this challenging economy.

**We also began implementing NC's new 16- and 17-year-old early voter registration program.** This was part of our larger effort to improve civic education and engagement for all, with a special focus on future leaders and citizens. Democracy NC's trainings and registration drives helped nearly 40,000 young Carolinians register to vote once they reach the age of 18!

**In the wake of the Citizens United ruling** allowing unlimited spending on election activities by corporations and unions, we organized a series of educational meetings and called for increased disclosure and more alternative funding sources for qualified candidates. We heard your dismay, too, at the implications of this ruling. With piqued awareness of the problem in mind, we whipped up support for public financing options, came close to expanding the NC Council of State program and succeeded in delivering North Carolina's support for moving the Fair Elections Now Act through a key committee — bringing us one step closer to Congressional public campaign financing.



**We are especially proud of our 2010 organizing work.** Building on 2008's efforts, we trained hundreds of citizens and a team of Democracy Summer interns in voter education and mobilization. We expanded our network of religious leader allies through our *Souls to the Polls* work. This focus on forging relationships with folks whom we can mobilize on an array of pro-democracy issues will yield returns well into the future.

**Research remained a cornerstone of our success in 2010.** Studies on the changing demographics of NC voters, success of the judicial public financing program, problematic special interest investments in Council of State races and outside money in legislative races all helped wake up North Carolinians to the challenges we face and distill complex policy issues.



Our behind-the-scenes investigative work involving the realtors' fight against property transfer taxes, campaign donor (individual and industry) violations and candidate disclosure provided evidence in the ongoing quest for meaningful regulation and enforcement.

One example of a sensible rule that comes from the work we do is that it is now a felony for a campaign donor to knowingly exceed contribution limits by \$10,000 or more.

At the end of 2010, as always, we asked:

**"What does it all add up to and where do we go from here?"**

**For the answer, we found ourselves starting at a potential recipe for lots more hard work:** Take a half-baked idea to add an expensive, unneeded voter ID requirement, a butchering of the Council of State public

financing program and a smear campaign against youth pre-registration — and all of a sudden, the year ahead looks more like a food fight than a victory banquet.

**We're ready for a fight and we're developing new recipes for success to win it.**

For example, we're taking one part populist outrage at the ever-increasing problem of excessive political money, a cup of bipartisan outcry for increased transparency, the intense and tempting flavor of fair districting and watching as things heat up. But how about some *new* flavors? What better time than now to add spiced-up *Pathways to Power* citizen engagement and empowerment workshops? How about robust demands that elected leaders focus on the state's economic problems and eschew political posturing? We're talking hot sauce-inspired push back against business as usual, with piquant demands for government that works for working people!

**Do not let the General Assembly carve away at the progress we've made.**

Demand preservation of judicial public financing, public financing for Commissioner of Insurance and other Council of State races. Insist on strict laws to disclose who is paying for election ads. Protect new rules restricting political contributions from vendors to those doling out contracts. We must be adamant in our demand for an end to "business as usual."



And how about, in these dire economic times, *closing special interest loopholes that have helped drain the state's coffers for these many years?* It's truly past time for a wake-up call about our state's revenues!

**Let's make sure North Carolina retains its reputation as a good government state.**

And let's demand impeccable service from our elected leaders. After all, they were sent to Raleigh to serve.

**Bon Appetit!**



# Thank You for Your Support in 2010

## We are grateful for the generous support of these donor-advised and family funds:

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### 2010 Income By Source

*Individuals & Donor-Advised Funds:*  
**\$209,399**

*Foundations, Nonprofits:*  
**\$630,290**

*Honorarium, Interest, etc.:*  
**\$36,083**

### 2010 Expenses By Program Area

*General Organizing:*  
**\$387,449**

*Democracy Summer & Leadership Training:*  
**\$178,266**

*Research:*  
**\$113,150**

*Administration:*  
**\$101,387**

*Fundraising:*  
**\$95,367**

Public Campaign  
Public Interest Projects  
Southern Coalition for Social Justice  
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## We are also very grateful to the following individual contributors:

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- Regular updates of our activities and special action alerts (if you list an email address).
- Notice of research reports.
- Invitations to workshops and other events.
- A positive feeling knowing you're helping to protect and improve democracy in North Carolina in concrete, quantifiable ways.

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