

URGENT! 50 days and counting . . .

The News & Observer calls Democracy North Carolina a "splendid watchdog group."

Bill Friday says we're a "much-needed advocate for good government."

Yes, we've exposed problems and championed reforms, but our best success comes when hundreds of people take action together, united on a set goal.

In that spirit, we need you to take action NOW in response to a special challenge. Four donors have made this pledge, as an incentive for you to take action as a Democracy Advocate:

If 200 people donate a total of \$10,000 before Dec. 31, we'll get a \$10,000 bonus gift.

Please use the form inside to make your gift of \$35 to \$100 or more, or whatever you can give. Please do it today!

Success depends on many individuals acting together to achieve a common goal.

Thank you for being a *Democracy Advocate.*

SPECIAL CHALLENGE

We have

50 Days
to find
200 Donors
who will give **\$35,**
\$50, \$100, \$200 . . .

. . . for a total of \$10,000.
If you and 199 others donate to Democracy North Carolina before Dec. 31, four donors will, together, provide \$10,000 more!

Please act NOW.
See the inside flap.

Democracy North Carolina is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose mission is to fulfill the promise of "one person, one vote" — to increase voter participation and reduce the money chase in politics. The staff are Molly Beacham, Carrie Bolton, Leigh Bradley, Bob Hall, A. Khamala, Adam Sotak, Peter Walz, and Elizabeth Waugh-Stewart. The Board of Directors are Judy Harrison Barry, Peg Chapin, Tom Coulson, Jenn Frye, Mike Glancy, Carol Haack, Rosalyn Jones, Margaret McCreary, Linda Sutton, Natalie Watson, Reginald Watson, and Heather Yandow. Fall/Winter 2005

Democracy North Carolina
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Carrboro, NC 27510

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DEMOCRACY NORTH CAROLINA

DEMOCRACY ADVOCATE

Months of Intense Activity Yield Lobby Reform, Other Victories

At crucial points during the debate to strengthen North Carolina's puny regulations of lobbyists, top state lawmakers received hundreds of emails and calls from Democracy Advocates like you. The public pressure paid off: Some legislative leaders wanted to "let the clock run out" and kill the reform bill, but the drum-beat for change was too loud and persistent.

The victory for lobby reform illustrates what we can achieve with a well-focused goal, a unified coalition and hard work!

Democracy North Carolina played a leading role, with Common Cause, in the NC Coalition for Lobby Reform: We issued two reports that documented the current law's lack of disclosure and

enforcement, educated the public, and worked closely with Rep. Joe Hackney and Sen. Tony Rand, the bill sponsors.

The new law, which becomes effective in 2007:

► Closes a "goodwill lobbying" loophole and requires disclosure of all spending on legislators,

their staff, and top executive branch officials.

► Requires monthly reports from lobbyists while the legislature meets.

► Adds new civil penalties and money for enforcement.

► Creates a 6-month "cooling off" period before a legislator can be a paid lobbyist.

With your help, other reforms moved forward, ready for more action in '06 (see box & inside.)

Your support as a Democracy Advocate makes the difference!

SUCCESS IN 2005

- Enacted lobby reform law.
- Signed up 72 legislators as sponsors of public financing for Council of State elections.
- Passed "One-Stop Same-Day Registration" bill in a key committee, ready for 2006.
- Enacted a law requiring a voter verifiable paper ballot.
- Passed Instant Run-off bill in state House, ready for '06.

For more on legislative wins, go to www.democracy-nc.org

Same-Day Registration & Voting Would Help Youth, All of Us!

Consider these dismal facts about voter participation:

- ▶ Year after year, North Carolina is among the worst 15 states for voter turnout.
- ▶ One million citizens in NC are not registered to vote.
- ▶ Of those, about 350,000 are youth, ages 18 to 25.

Now consider this civic truth: When more people participate in shaping their government, life improves for everyone.

In fact, the states with the highest voter turnout, year after year, enjoy the lowest school dropout rates, smallest gaps between rich and poor, least crime, and most equitable tax structures!

Those states also make voting easy. The ones that let citizens register and vote on the same day enjoy a turnout rate that is 8 to 15 percentage points above the national average.

NC Fair Share and Democracy North Carolina are now leading

a campaign to begin Same-Day Registration in NC, just during the Early Voting period. Citizens who miss the 25-day cutoff for registration could go to an Early Voting site, show identification, register and vote, all at once.

The proposal has safeguards against fraud and is approved by top state election officials.

A bill that embodies this idea (H-851 by Rep. Deborah Ross) passed a key House committee and will be debated in 2006.

For more about the Coalition for Same-Day Registration, call us at 1-888-OUR-VOTE or visit www.democracy-nc.org.



YOUNG VOTERS. Tameika Hopkins fills out a survey from Amanda Smith, one of our *Democracy Summer* interns. The survey of 500+ youth found that only 2% knew the registration deadline and 68% of those unregistered would have likely voted in Nov. '04 under Same-Day Registration.

Inside Democracy North Carolina

Beth Messersmith left as co-director of Democracy North Carolina a tad early, with the premature delivery of Aiden in May. Happily, Beth and son (and Papa Jamey) are all doing very well. Beth is the new president of NC



Beth and Aiden

Voters for Clean Elections, the public financing coalition, so will continue to be active with us.

Elizabeth Waugh-Stewart, former assistant director of The Women's Center in Chapel Hill, is our new deputy director and

Thank you for supporting Democracy North Carolina with your activism and your donations

is ably leading the organization with Bob Hall and other staff.

Carrie Bolton, longtime organizer and former board chair of Democracy South, suffered a stroke in August, affecting her speech. For a gifted orator and minister, the loss is especially tragic. Thankfully, Carrie is steadily recovering, with therapy & faith.

Peter Walz, *Democracy Summer* coordinator and organizer, will be the new director of organizing for the Conservation Network, a great ally. We'll miss him dearly, but he's not going far away!

Target: Gamblers' Illegal Donations

In June 2004, Democracy North Carolina asked the State Board of Elections to investigate an apparent conspiracy by the video-poker industry to make illegal campaign donations. (*See our complaint at www.democracy-nc.org.*)

Because the donations were part of \$108,000 the industry gave House Speaker Jim Black, the press and federal agents took notice. Now Black is at the center of controversies involving the lottery, lobbying and video poker. Some wonder if we unfairly "picked on" Black. The truth is we have filed

complaints involving Democrats (e.g., Board of Transportation members and road builders) and Republicans (e.g., hog barons and Harold Brubaker), but in this case we said we found no wrongdoing

on Black's part. We did find lots of evidence of corruption by donors which had to be disclosed.

Candidates will face even greater pressure from special interests as the money chase intensifies — good reason for public financing, plus ethics and lobbying reforms.

MORE RESEARCH & NEWS AT www.democracy-nc.org

- Why Health Care is Sick
- Voting Rights Act Renewal
- Pollution Lobby Update
- Democracy Summer 2006
- Judicial Reform in Court

Yes, I'll be one of the 200 donors urgently needed before December 31 to secure matching donations of \$10,000

Here's my tax-deductible donation (*payable to Democracy North Carolina*).

\$35 \$50 \$100 \$200 \$500 Other \$ _____

- Please sign me up to receive occasional email Action Alerts for election reform.
- Just send me electronic versions of the newsletter to save postage and paper.

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Credit Card Donation: Visa Mastercard Card # _____ Exp. _____

Mail to Democracy-NC, 105 W. Main St., Carrboro, NC 27510. Or complete form online at www.democracy-nc.org

Democracy Advocates

- ▶ help advance voting rights and electoral reform in NC by responding to action alerts and/or by making a donation. As a Democracy Advocate, you'll get:
- ▶ Regular updates and action alerts (if you list an email);
- ▶ Notice of research reports;
- ▶ Invitations to skills-building workshops and other events;
- ▶ A positive feeling, knowing you're improving democracy in North Carolina, step by step.