

(Washington) – Today **Congressman John B. Larson**, Chairman of the Task Force on Election Reform, announced that four members of the task force introduced legislation yesterday aimed at removing the influence of wealthy donors from the electoral process. Recognizing the need to reform our broken campaign finance system, these proposals will amplify the voices of average Americans and rein in the influence of large dollar contributors.

**Congressman David Price**

and

**Congressman Chris Van Hollen**

reintroduced the Empowering Citizens Act,

**Congressman John Sarbanes**

reintroduced the Grassroots Democracy Act, and

**Congressman John Yarmuth**

and

**Congresswoman Chellie Pingree**

reintroduced the Fair Elections Now Act.

"Today, members of the Task Force on Election reform introduced three thoughtful pieces of legislation intended to turn our electoral process back over to the American people," said Congressman Larson. "Now, through the framework of our Task Force on Election Reform, those members will work together to take the best parts of each proposal, and mold them into one bill that will help rid our campaigns of big money influence once and for all."

### **Empowering Citizens Act**

The Empowering Citizens Act combines the ideas behind Reps. Price and Chris Van Hollen's (D-MD) Presidential Funding Act, which mends the small donor matching system for presidential campaigns, with a new title creating a similar small donor matching system for congressional elections. The bill also blunts the impact of Super PACs by strengthening anti-coordination rules to prohibit candidate-specific Super PACs from operating as arms of candidate campaigns.

"The Empowering Citizens Act is designed to put elections back into the hands of ordinary Americans by empowering small donors and forbidding Super PACs from operating as arms of candidates' campaigns. I am dedicated to working with the other members of the Task Force on a comprehensive package that ensures that the people who finance our campaigns are the people we represent, and that our democracy gives every American the opportunity to hold elected officials accountable for their actions," said Congressman David Price .

"House Democrats are committed to ensuring the voice of the average voter is not drowned out by the deluge of secret money that has flooded our elections," said Congressman Van Hollen. "Together with the DISCLOSE Act, the Empowering Citizens Act, the Grassroots Democracy Act, and the Fair Elections Now Act will help restore faith in the American democratic process. I applaud Congressman Larson and the entire task force for their continuing work on this important issue."

### **Grassroots Democracy Act**

The Grassroots Democracy Act is a three-pronged reform proposal that empowers everyday Americans with a refundable tax credit to participate in campaign giving; amplifies the impact of grassroots donations with a multiple match framework to fund campaigns of grassroots candidates; and fights back against unlimited outside spending with a People's Fund, which provides additional financial support in races where the voices of grassroots candidates are being drowned out.

"Congress' dependency on big money is corroding the institution's ability to process the will of the people," said Congressman Sarbanes. "We must pursue reforms that amplify the voice of the grassroots, giving our citizens and the candidates they support the tools needed to push back against moneyed interests. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Task Force on Election Reform to craft the strongest bill possible to ensure that the voice of every American can be heard in our democracy."

### **Fair Elections Now Act**

The Fair Elections Now Act (FENA) would provide public financing for Congressional campaigns, enabling small donors to play on the same field as special interests and encouraging a more diverse pool of candidates. The legislation is designed to leverage small-donor contributions by providing a 5-to-1 federal match of contributions below \$100 from residents of a candidate's state in both the primary and general elections. The voluntary program would also provide grants to ensure that primary winners are competitive in general elections.

"Special-interest money has corroded the public's confidence in our government and fueled the perception that Congress is for sale to the highest bidder," Congressman Yarmuth said. "Until we get big money out of politics, we will never be able to responsibly address the major issues facing American families. The public financing system this legislation establishes is critical to repairing our broken electoral system and rebuilding our trust with the American people."

"American elections have gotten to be entirely too focused on raising and spending massive amounts of money. Politicians need to spend less time on the phone asking for contributions and more timetalking to the people they represent. The Fair Elections Now Act would take elections out of the hands of big donors and put it back where it belongs, with everyday Americans," said Congresswoman Chellie Pingree.

The Task Force on Election Reform was created by Leader Nancy Pelosi to develop a legislative agenda for reforms to the electoral process under the D.A.R.E. (Disclose, Amend, Reform, and Empower) framework for the 113th Congress.

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