

(For) I-04-2022 - Voters' Right to Know Act

Vote “YES” on **Prop XXX** the “Voters’ Right to Know Act,” also known as Stop Dark Money, if you believe, as we do, that Arizona voters should know who is actually behind political ads.

Voters’ Right to Know/Stop Dark Money is a non-partisan group that believes democracy works best when election funding is transparent. We believe that Arizona voters should have the right to know the source of funds spent to influence their votes. **Proposition XXX** will give us that Right.

Current Arizona law allows unlimited money to be spent on anonymous political ads. Currently, the names and motivations of those actually paying for these ads remains hidden.

Yet, when an Arizona citizen contributes \$50 or more to a candidate, they must disclose their name, the amount contributed, home address and employer. This information becomes publicly available and searchable on the internet. But people spending millions on political ads to influence our vote do not have to disclose anything.

We believe knowing who is running political ads is critical to understanding their message and motivation. Without accountability for what is said, those running misleading or inaccurate ads face no consequences and politics becomes dirtier.

Proposition XXX requires any group spending over \$50,000 on statewide elections or \$25,000 on local elections to disclose the source of all contributions over \$5,000. The Citizens Clean Elections Commission will investigate complaints of noncompliance, force disclosure and fine violators.

Stop keeping voters in the dark and shine a light on the secret funders!

Please vote YES on **Proposition XXX**.

Terry Goddard, David Tedesco, Bob Bertrand, Paul Johnson

Co-chairs: Voters’ Right to Know

Voters’ Right to Know, Sponsoring Organization, Voters’ Right to Know, Phoenix; Terry Goddard, Co-Chair, Voters’ Right to Know, Phoenix; David Tedesco, Co-Chair, Voters’ Right to Know, Phoenix; Bob Bertrand, Co-Chair, Voters’ Right to Know, Phoenix; and Paul Johnson, Co-Chair, Voters’ Right to Know, Scottsdale

Dark money happens on all sides of the political fence. Individuals and groups on the Left and the Right that won’t tell you who they are, spend vast amounts of money on media advertising trying to influence how you vote.

As an ordinary citizen, if I donate to a candidate’s campaign, I must disclose my name, address, and occupation. Yet the names of donors to dark money groups, with names that tell you nothing about what they really believe, like “Americans for Everything Good”, are never disclosed. These dark money groups can spend unlimited amounts of money on political ads. They don’t care about the citizens of Arizona. They only care about their own (hidden) agenda.

The Voters’ Right to Know Act, **Proposition XXX** doesn’t stop any person or group from expressing their opinions. It’s about transparency. Period. It’s about requiring anonymous, dark money donors to disclose to the public their names and how much they donate, just like the rest of us.

In Citizens United, the Supreme Court ruled that corporations have constitutional rights. But that ruling also said that requiring disclosure of the names of donors who pay for political media advertising is allowed under the First Amendment, that voters should have the right to know who is trying to persuade them to vote one way or the other. The late Justice Scalia, who voted with the majority in Citizens United,

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was a fierce advocate for transparency. He said: “Requiring people to stand up in public for their political acts fosters civic courage, without which democracy is doomed. For my part, I do not look forward to a society which, thanks to the Supreme Court, campaigns anonymously... hidden from public scrutiny and protected from accountability of criticism. This does not resemble the Home of the Brave.”

Diane McQueen, Self, Dewey

I have been active in both partisan and nonpartisan organizations in AZ since I moved here in 1966. I have volunteered on many campaigns, both on behalf of candidates and initiatives, some of which were successful and others not. However, I don't think I've volunteered for one campaign where there is as much support – across party lines, age, gender, race, and any other category you can think of -- as for Voters' Right to Know. The clarity and simplicity of this Initiative requires almost no 'persuasion' on my part when I have knocked on doors & gone to events to collect signatures. AZ voters that I've talked to all agree that there should be transparency regarding campaign donations regardless of which type of legal entity to which you donate, as long as that entity is actively involved in campaigning for or against a candidate or ballot measure. Dark money is NOT acceptable to most Republicans, Independents, Democrats, young & first time voters, folks my age (I'm 84), pro lifers and pro choice folks, etc. They have all told me “put your name where your money goes.” Please vote YES on Voters' Right to Know.

Rivko Knox, Phoenix

Four score and seven years ago our forefathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men [and women] are created equal. – Abraham Lincoln

Now we are engaged in a great... contest over who gets heard and whose interests matter in making and carrying out laws in Arizona. Will we allow Dark Money special interests to continue to drown out the voice of the PEOPLE?

The world might little note, nor long remember what we each say on our sacred and secret ballots. But we have a chance to make sure the world can never forget when Arizona voters enact into law the Stop Dark Money aka The People's Right to Know initiative.

It is for us, the civic minded voters of Arizona, to dedicate ourselves to the proposition that our children and grandchildren will be able to know by experience what Lincoln meant (and I paraphrase) when he closed the Gettysburg address declaring that we now emphatically resolve that this nation and state, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Further, as Suffragette Susan B. Anthony, whose passion and perseverance was rewarded finally when the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920, 20 years after her death, stated – Wherever women gather together failure is impossible.

Let your action in this election be a tribute to both Anthony and Lincoln.

Steve Muratore, publisher, Arizona Eagletarian blog <https://stevemuratore.blogspot.com>

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Steve Muratore, Publisher, Arizona Eagletarian (blog), Scottsdale

I will vote YES on the "Voter's Right To Know Act." I am retired and had a great career in health care and I raised 3 kids. Any time my kids showed up with money or things that I didn't know where they came from, I asked them, "Who gave it to you? How'd you get it? What did they want in return?" I had to protect them from drugs and danger and teach them about influencers. I ask my politicians the same things. Because, I have to still protect my kids, grandkids and communities from dangerous and unscrupulous elements. Recently we saw undocumented dollars try to influence people's votes in the Phoenix Light Rail Extension vote. I and my neighbors in the Payson region had our APS rates increase. Of course after APS put 10 Million Undocumented dollars into candidates campaigns. I felt ambushed. So did the retirees on fixed incomes.

Things were no different when I led healthcare organizations. I always needed to know who was providing money, free trips, supplies, free seminars to influence our medical staff referrals and decisions. Containing expenses and remaining in compliance with federal and state laws required it be done. Bottom line, I support transparency. I like sunshine on things. I live with smart family members and wise neighbors. They and I need to know what we're buying into when we vote. To do that, we need to know for what the dark money spenders are paying. Help us all out by voting YES

Gary Brennan, LFACHE, Retired, Tempe

Please Vote for Transparency: Vote Yes on **Proposition XXX**, the Voters' Right to Know Act

Dark money is political spending on election advertising by anonymous sources. It is called "Dark Money" because we can't see who's sponsoring the messages in political ads.

Under current Arizona law, rich power brokers get special treatment and unduly influence elections by secretly spending money on advertisements and promotions supporting their candidate or ballot proposition. This "Dark Money" bombards voters with negative ads, misleading information, and even outright lies.

Because we don't know who's paying for the advertisements, ordinary people don't have the information they need to figure out whether it's credible or not. It's like my grandmother used to always say... "According to whom?" Well, with Dark Money dominating our elections, we can't answer that question for ourselves.

Proposition XXX will fix that. It simply builds transparency into our political system by requiring ALL major contributors to identify themselves if they spend more than \$5,000 for a campaign or candidate.

Elections have profound impacts on public health and policy— good and bad. Persons that get elected to public office at the federal state and local level routinely make decisions that influence public health. They appoint people for key jobs (we saw how important that was during the pandemic). They also make funding decisions that impact public health.

In short, elections have a significant impact on public health. That's why it's super important to have an informed electorate, so people can make informed decisions about what they decide in the ballot box- whether it's a person running for elected office at the state, federal, or local level- or whether it's about a voter initiative.

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Please cast your vote for Transparency. Vote YES on **Proposition XXX**.

Will Humble, Director, Arizona Department of Health Services (2009-2015), Phoenix

Fellow Voters;

Please vote YES on the Voters' Right to Know Act.

You will hear some weak arguments from pro-dark money groups about their desire to hide their corrupting campaign spending.

Dark money spending has never been a tradition in America and only those who want to rig our political system argue for it today.

They, for instance, point to a Supreme Court case called NAACP vs Alabama to argue that people should hide their money in political campaigns in order to protect themselves from threats and intimidation.

That is not what that case was about. That case was about keeping membership lists private, not political contributions. Further, even our conservative Supreme Court has continued to uphold the right of public disclosure in political campaigns.

As the very conservative Justice Scalia said, "There are laws against threats and intimidation; and harsh criticism, short of unlawful action, is a price our people have traditionally been willing to pay for self-governance. Requiring people to stand up in public for their political acts fosters civic courage, without which democracy is doomed."

He continued, "For my part, I do not look forward to a society which, thanks to the Supreme Court, campaigns anonymously and even exercises the direct democracy of initiative and referendum hidden from public scrutiny and protected from the accountability of criticism. This does not resemble the Home of the Brave."

The real intimidation to our democracy is coming from dark money. When I was a lawmaker, fellow legislators told me personally how they had been threatened with dark money if they did not vote a certain way on legislation.

Voting in favor of this Proposition is the first step to begin to repair the wounds inflicted by an acidic political system.

Ken Clark,
Former Legislator, Phoenix

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The League of Women Voters of Arizona strongly supports this initiative which will force campaigns to reveal the sources of “dark money.” Groups that currently can legally refuse to disclose their donors would have to reveal the original source of funds used to purchase media advertising. Voters should have the right to know which special interests are trying to influence election outcomes by purchasing ads. This initiative will provide that right if passed by Arizona voters.

A “yes” for this measure will require any person spending over \$50,000 on statewide campaigns, or \$25,000 on other campaigns, to disclose the original sources (people or corporations) of contributions exceeding \$5,000. They must also disclose their largest donors in their campaign materials. The Citizens Clean Elections Commission, a non-partisan, voter-established body, will enforce this Act. Violations could incur substantial penalties.

The League of Women Voters of Arizona believes democracy should be protected from distortion by undisclosed individuals and corporations buying media in election campaigns to persuade voters. The League supports the public’s right to know the source of money spent on advertising to influence voters.

It is time to stop “dark money,” the practice of laundering political contributions to hide the original source.

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ARIZONA URGES YOU TO VOTE YES.

Pinny Sheoran, President, League of Women Voters of Arizona, Phoenix

Sponsored by League of Women Voters of Arizona

We as Arizona voters are constantly deluged with campaign TV ads and printed material that feature misleading disclaimers that begin with “Paid for by _____”. These mentioned organizations are often simply vehicles behind which rich corporations or super PACs hide. Sadly, current Arizona election laws do not require that the ORIGINAL source of campaign funds be identified in campaign ads. As a result, voters have no way of knowing what person or special interest group is providing huge amounts of funding to candidates who then carry an unspoken obligation to do the bidding of their benefactor. We saw this dynamic in the previous election, when newly elected Corporation Commission members went about thanking APS for their millions in donated funds with their generous voting decisions. And since APS had been able to make their campaign contributions to the pair anonymously, the public didn’t find out about this deception until years later, after it was too late to make an informed vote. We see it all the time. And this kind of corruption will continue to flourish in Arizona until we as voters pass the Voters’ Right to Know Act and demand to be able to see, in all election campaign advertising, exactly who is behind a candidate before we decide to vote for that person.

Kelly Gibbs, Arizona Voter, Flagstaff

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I support **Proposition XXX**, The Voter's Right to Know, as it is time we stop the spending of Dark Money from anonymous sources spent to influence our vote. Voters need and deserve the transparency behind political advertising in order to make informed political decisions. Dark Money allows organizations to hid behind a cloak of secrecy and engage in false, negative, and misleading political advertising. It is important that these political influencers come out of the shadows and provide names and addresses and amounts behind their contribution just like we ordinary citizens must do when we contribute to a campaign. **Proposition XXX** furthers our democracy by allowing informed voter decisions.

Patrice Horstman, Supervisor, Coconino County Board of Supervisors, Flagstaff

I'm voting YES on **Proposition XXX** because Arizona voters have a right to know who is spending money to influence their votes.

Proposition XXX sheds a light on anonymous, dark money that gets spent every election cycle to run negative (and oftentimes false) attack ads.

I have to disclose my donations to campaigns, why should a few dark money power brokers get special treatment? Why should they get to hide their donations behind innocuous sounding campaign names like "Citizens for a Bright Future" and then bombard us with lies and misstatements?

When we know who the messenger is, we get to carefully consider their credibility.

Just like you, I want fair and clean elections in Arizona. We want to know who is trying to influence our votes. Afterall, our votes are our voices.

Let's help make sure that Arizona voters have a chance to make informed decisions at the ballot box.

Let's get hidden, dark money out of Arizona's politics. Please join me in voting YES on **Proposition XXX**.

Becky Daggett, Flagstaff

Please join me in supporting **Prop XXX**, the Voter's Right to Know (Stop Dark Money) initiative. I personally know what terrible things can happen when Dark Money is used in campaigns. In 2014, when I ran for re-election to the Corporation Commission, millions of dollars in libelous Dark Money television ads were run against me, dominating the airwaves. It was like a mortar shelling in a war zone; we did not know who was doing it, and there was no way to respond legally or financially when you are a Clean Elections candidate like me. Who do you sue when they hide behind anonymity? My campaign staff even got threatening anonymous phone calls. When they thought they would never be found out, the level of

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cowardice on their part was appalling, saying things in their ads that they would never say if their identity was known.

When I was re-elected in 2018, I set out to discover who was behind this Dark Money spending. I subpoenaed Pinnacle West/APS about all of its political spending. Through that subpoena, I uncovered millions in their dark money spending. Not only did my subpoena lay bare the millions of dollars used against me, it forced Pinnacle West/APS to disclose its influence peddling through its other Dark Money spending. On the heels of their 2014 Dark Money spending, there was an enormous rate increase and confusing rate plans for APS customers to choose from, proving that Dark Money takes money out of people's pockets. The \$10 million in Dark Money spending seems to have netted Pinnacle West/APS record profits, at the expense of consumers.

The Stop Dark Money ballot initiative will provide the Transparency that all elections should have in a democracy. Please support it with your vote!

Sandra Kennedy, Corporation Commissioner, Arizona Corporation Commission, Phoenix

8 years ago, I published a series of investigative reports on the dark money which flooded Arizona's 2014 gubernatorial and Corporation Commission elections. Much of that money was provided by regulated utility APS, and it very likely made the difference in who was elected. (E.g. <http://bit.ly/50ShadesOfDarkMoneyArchive>) Stop Dark Money will help shine a light on any similar dark efforts in the future. With this transparency, Arizonans will have more confidence in our electoral system, and will worry less that shadowy forces are manipulating our votes (and our system)!

Please join me in voting YES to Stop Dark Money!

Paul Weich, Candidate, AZ House, LD12, Phoenix

I have volunteered to support the Stop Dark Money initiative for several years now. This is a common-sense issue that has strong support among Arizonans regardless of political party because we all benefit from transparency in our elections. Dark money allows wealthy donors--many of whom are out of state--to have an outsized influence on our state and local elections with no accountability. This law will not prevent anyone from donating to support candidates or ballot measures, but it will allow voters to see where major funding is coming from, thus allowing us all to make more informed choices on Election Day. Besides this, anonymity removes accountability. If major donors are required to identify themselves, campaigns will be held to a higher level of accuracy and civility. We've all seen too many misleading and hostile campaign ads, and the Voters' Right to Know Act will encourage campaigns to support their causes and candidates with civil discourse rather than lies and attacks. Arizona needs clean and transparent campaigns, and we need it now.

Michael Rulon, Flagstaff