Capitol Contact
by State Representative Steve Simon
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Let's Replace Secrecy with Sunshine on Campaign Cash

Dear Friends,

This past week, I joined with Governor Dayton and a small band of legislators to propose a law that would provide the public with better information on who gives (and gets) campaign contributions. For some unknown reason, Minnesota law on this issue is behind the times. Reform is overdue. For me, this is an election integrity issue. We should be providing more information, not less, on the financing of our election campaigns.

Steve

Here's the Problem:

- Rightly or wrongly, many people perceive a connection between campaign cash and Capitol outcomes – which is why we're supposed to have a system in place to track who gives (and who gets) campaign contributions.
- While we have a good system in place to track campaign donations and spending in election years, the current system contains a loophole: In non-election years (like 2011), no reporting is required until January 31 of the following year. This means that 13 months go by before Minnesotans get a glimpse of who's giving and getting campaign cash.
- In part, because of our 13-month period of silence, a watchdog group called the Public Disclosure Project gave Minnesota a grade of "F" for its campaign disclosure system.

Here's the Proposed Solution:

Quarterly financial reports for all Minnesota campaigns.

We should do what the federal government does: Require quarterly reporting of all campaign spending and giving. This would include all candidates, political parties, and political "committees" who accept or donate money for campaign purposes. It's a simple way to provide "sunshine" in place of the secrecy we now have during non-election years. I'm hopeful the proposal will attract support from people of all political parties.

We need a system that allows the public to find information about who's giving and getting campaign contributions.

As always, please feel free to contact me about any issue, idea, or concern.

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