

**Campaign Legal Center • Common Cause • Democracy 21  
League of Women Voters • Public Citizen • U.S. PIRG**

February 20, 2008

Dear Representative Paul,

Our organizations strongly urge you to make a public commitment to use the public financing system in the presidential general election if you are the Republican nominee and if the Democratic nominee also agrees to use the public financing system in the general election.

Our organizations also strongly urge you to co-sponsor legislation to fix the presidential public financing system (H.R. 4294), introduced in the House by Representatives David Price (D-NC) and Chris Shays (R-CT).

Our organizations include the Campaign Legal Center, Common Cause, Democracy 21, the League of Women Voters, Public Citizen and U.S. PIRG.

The presidential public financing system was established to protect the integrity of the presidency and the interests of the American people. Every Democratic and Republican nominee for president since 1976 has used the public financing system for their general election campaigns.

Last year, our organizations sent a letter to presidential candidates (March 8, 2007) asking candidates for a public commitment to use the public financing system for the 2008 presidential general election, if they are nominated by their party and their major party opponent also agreed to use the system.

The letter also asked presidential candidates to co-sponsor the legislation introduced to fix the presidential public financing system, if they were members of the Senate or the House or, if they were not in Congress, to agree to publicly endorse the legislation.

You were not an announced candidate at the time and therefore did not receive the letter.

In our March 8 letter last year, we stated:

It is essential to the health of our democracy that we avoid having the presidency on a permanent auction block and presidential candidates engaged in a never-ending race to spend ever-growing massive amounts of private contributions.

We also noted in the letter that in upholding the public financing system's constitutionality, the Supreme Court in *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976) set forth the policy goals that led to its enactment:

Congress was legislating for the "general welfare" – to reduce the deleterious influence of large contributions on our political process, to facilitate communication by candidates with the electorate, and to free candidates from the rigors of fundraising.

We further stated in the March 8 letter:

In the 2008 presidential election, for example, if the two major party nominees run their primary and general election campaigns wholly on private contributions, they are expected to spend a combined total of *\$1 billion* on their campaigns.

This, in turn, places an unyielding demand on the candidates to raise huge amounts of private contributions and to use individual "bundlers" to provide six-and-seven figure total amounts for their campaigns. The big-money donors of the Watergate-era presidential election will be big-money bundlers in the 2008 presidential election.

Our organizations believe it is in the Nation's best interests for the 2008 general election to be run under the presidential public financing system.

We strongly urge you to make a public commitment to use public financing in the general election if you are the Republican nominee and if the Democratic nominee also agrees to use the public financing system in the general election. We also strongly urge you to co-sponsor H.R. 4294, the legislation introduced in the House to repair the presidential public financing system for future elections.

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