



Big Money in the District of Columbia: The Case for D.C. Fair Elections

Big Money Dominance in the District of Columbia

Weary from a consistent string of campaign finance controversies, D.C. residents are increasingly clamoring for changes to a system that plays less and less to the average voter. On issues like the Exelon merger and affordable housing, the voices of DC residents have too often been drowned out by the preferences of a set of powerful, wealthy donors. In 2014, residents experienced a multi-million dollar mayoral race with contributors to the mayoral race ranging from large out of state corporations like Comcast to prominent local businessmen such as Michael Glosserman, managing partner of real estate titan JBG, and Washington Nationals owner Ted Lerner. After her election, Mayor Bowser's allies started a PAC that could solicit unlimited contributions, but the public outcry forced FreshPAC to shut down when it was revealed that many of its most generous donors were city contractors. Under D.C. law, corporations can even give directly to candidates' campaigns, which is illegal at the federal level. In the most recent Mayoral campaign, less than 45% of contributors to either of the top two campaigns came from DC residents, and the average contribution was over \$350, well more than everyday DC residents can afford.

The Fair Elections program gives everyday D.C. residents the ability to support and elect candidates who are accountable to them, not super PAC donors or big-money campaign donors. It gives candidates the ability to run with the backing of people they wish to represent without relying on super PACs, wealthy donors, or money from outside the District. While we won't eliminate big money overnight, we can dramatically reduce its influence and raise the importance of everyday D.C. residents in our political system.