

Far-Left Groups Behind the “Voter-Owned” Elections Movement

HB 1517, the “Voter-Owned Elections Pilot” bill, was approved by a 53-51 margin today in its second reading on the House floor. The legislation is scheduled to come up for its third and final reading this Monday. While Civitas’ polling has shown that a majority of North Carolina voters oppose HB 1517, this bill is part of a larger agenda at both the state and national level. As laid out during the 2001 legislative session (cf. HB1410 and S1054), the ultimate plan is to phase in taxpayer-financed elections for **all** statewide races in North Carolina.

On a national scale, the concept of “public campaign financing” is being pushed in many states, as well as at the federal level. An examination of just who is behind this movement at the national level shows that publicly financed elections have long been a pet project of the radical Left.

Leading Organizations Have Ties to Communist Party USA

Following is a brief description of four of the leading national advocates of taxpayer-financed elections:

- **USAction:** William McNary, President of USAction, is a longtime radical activist who has written for and supported the official newspaper of the Communist Party USA, the *People’s Weekly World*. This organization also sponsors the Immigrant Workers Free Ride Coalition, which seeks to secure amnesty and expanded rights and protections for illegal immigrants. USAction is the reincarnation of a group called Citizen Action, an organization largely destroyed by its role in the Teamster Union money-laundering scandal of the 1990s.
- **Democracy Matters:** A student group that offers paid scholarships to students willing to start chapters on their own campuses (talk about buying influence!). Democracy Matters encourages students to engage in “agit-prop theater,” a term coined by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in which students perform skits decrying the evils of capitalism.
- **Public Campaign:** Leading staff members of Public Campaign bring a wealth of radical-left credentials to the table. The national programs director is a former advocate for the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). The SEIU is the largest labor union in North America, comprised largely of government employees. Designated a 527, SEIU devoted more than \$65 million to defeat President George W. Bush (R) in 2004. This group also supports full amnesty for illegal aliens. In addition, Public Campaign board member Tracy Sturdivant is director of the far-left group People for the American Way (PFAW). PFAW gained notoriety when it created a nationwide ad campaign, called “Let’s Move On,” in response to President Bill Clinton’s (D) potential impeachment. This campaign was formally appropriated by MoveOn.org. PFAW also went to great lengths to influence the 2004 presidential election. They dispatched roughly 8,000 lawyers and law students across the nation to key battleground states in search of alleged voting violations. In Florida alone, they filed nine lawsuits – before the election even took place! – ranging from complains about minority voter discrimination to problems with ballot counting.
- **Demos:** Several extreme leftists serve on the board of Demos. For example, Clarissa Martinez de Castro is the director of state/local public policy for the National Council of La Raza – a group that hopes to achieve the repartition of the American Southwest as a new state called Aztlan, to be controlled by the government of Mexico.

Taxpayer-financed Campaign Groups Funded by Radical Left Foundations

A look at some of the leading funders of the “voter-owned” election movement reveals a network of foundations notorious for their extreme left-wing sympathies.

- **Open Society Institute:** Founded and chaired by leftist billionaire George Soros, this organization is also a heavy contributor to the open borders movement.
- **Tides Foundation:** This foundation receives funding from Soros, as well as Theresa-Heinz Kerry, the wife of Senator John Kerry (D-Mass.). The foundation has contributed to MoveOn.org, the Arab-American Action Network, and two pro-Castro groups: United for Peace and Justice; and the Center for Constitutional Rights. Board chairman Wade Rathke is also the founder of the far-left group ACORN, and is a former activist for the socialist group Students for a Democratic Society.
- **Arca Foundation:** Known for funding pro-Castro, pro-Sandanista organizations in the 1980s. Recently received praise from Michael Moore and Howard Dean.
- **Columbia Foundation:** One of their self-described core values is an anti-capitalist agenda cloaked in environmentalism. One of their board members recently admitted the foundation's real mission is "not clean air and water, (but) rather ... the demolition of technological/industrial civilization."

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