



THE PEOPLE'S PLEDGE

The People's Pledge, negotiated by Scott Brown and Elizabeth Warren in the heated Massachusetts U.S. Senate race of 2012, was an agreement between the two senate candidates to reject outside advertisements on their behalf. The People's Pledge stated that candidates would "work together to limit the influence of third party advertisements." The candidates agreed that, if such an ad aired on television, radio, or in print, the candidate benefiting from the ad would donate, from their own campaign account, half of the cost of the advertisement to a charity of the opposing candidate's choice. The Pledge worked.

The People's Pledge Effectively Raises Transparency And Accountability

Common Cause Massachusettsⁱ compared the Warren vs. Brown race to tightly contested U.S. Senate races in Virginia, Wisconsin, and Ohio. In those three states, donations from the top 15 Super PAC donors outmatched all small donations by 5 to 1, despite there being 175,000 small donors. In contrast, in the 2012 Massachusetts race, small donations outmatched outside group spending by 3 to 1. In addition, there was five times more "dark money" in the Virginia, Wisconsin, and Ohio elections than in Massachusetts. Ninety-seven percent of ads bought by outside groups in Virginia, Wisconsin and Ohio were negative. No outside money was spent on television ads in Massachusetts.

The People's Pledge Is Quickly Gaining Traction

Since the Warren/Brown Senate race, many candidates have joined their opponents in signing comparable versions of The Pledge or have gained positive media attention by requesting that their opponents join them in taking The Pledge.

Maine Senate Race, 2012: In Maine, now Senator Angus King gained substantial positive media attentionⁱⁱ when he asked opponents to sign People's Pledge, despite the fact that his opponents never accepted his offer.

Massachusetts Senate Race, 2013: Senator Ed Markey challenged opponent, Gabriel Gomezⁱⁱⁱ to take the Pledge. Gomez refused. Markey held a press conference^{iv} next to an empty chair, juxtaposing his commitment with Gomez's refusal, which Markey used as proof that Gomez benefitted from money spent by unpopular influences in Massachusetts, such as the Koch brothers. Markey won.

Los Angeles Mayoral Race, 2013: Eric Garcetti proposed signing the People's Pledge^v as part of the mayoral race and gained substantial positive media attention, for example from the Los Angeles Times^{vi}, the Los Angeles Magazine^{vii} and Huffington Post for his proposition. Opponents refused the offer. Garcetti won the mayoral election.

Maryland Governor Race, 2014: Maryland Attorney General Douglas Gansler gained a substantial amount of media attention, including a favorable editorial by the Washington Post^{viii} by calling for the People's Pledge in the Democratic primary in Maryland.

Massachusetts Governor Race, 2014: Democratic candidates are collaborating to finalize a People's Pledge^{ix} that they have all agreed to take.

Rhode Island Governor Race, 2014: All the three Democrats running have called^x upon opponents fighting to receive the Democratic Nomination for Governor to sign the pledge.

New Hampshire Senate Race, 2014: Democratic candidates Jeanne Shaheen and Carol Shea-Porter have publicly requested that Republican candidates Frank Guinta and Dan Innis to take the People's Pledge. The latter two have

refused, resulting in media focus on the significant proportion of their campaign funding that originates from unknown outside sources.^{xi}

Polls Show Broad And Substantial Public Opposition To Outside Spending

83% of Americans (85% of Democrats, 81% of Republicans, 78% of Independents) want limits on campaign contributions from corporations. 90% of high-earners support such limits. *Associated Press poll^{xii} (August 2012)*

8 in 10 Americans “support limits on the amount of money given to groups trying to influence U.S. elections”
ABC-National Constitution Center poll^{xiii} (August 2012)

7 in 10 Americans say Super PACs should be illegal, including six in 10 Republicans.
ABC News/Washington Post poll^{xiv} (March 2012)

90% of Americans believe that corporate money holds excessive influence in politics.
Bannon Communications poll^{xv} (November 2012)

Across political and demographic spectrums, voters are angered by the influence of big money. In the 49 most vulnerable Republican seats, 2/3 of voters support “a plan to overhaul campaign spending by getting rid of big donations to political candidates.”

Greenberg Quinlan Rosner for Democracy Corps and Public Campaign Action Fund poll^{xvi} (October 2012)

66% of small business owners view the *Citizens United* ruling as bad for the ability of small businesses to compete. Only 9% say it is good for small business.

American Sustainable Business Council-Main Street Alliance-Small Business Majority poll (Dec 2011-Jan 2012)

ⁱ A Plea For A Pledge: Outside Spending In Competitive 2012 U.S. Senate Races [Source: <http://www.commoncause.org/atf/cf/%7BFB3C17E2-CDD1-4DF6-92BE-BD4429893665%7D/Plea%20for%20a%20Pledge%20Final.pdf>]

ⁱⁱ Maine Senate Candidate Challenges Opponents to Sign “People’s Pledge” Style Agreement to Curb Super PACs [Source: http://www.masslive.com/politics/index.ssf/2012/06/maine_senate_candidate_challen.html]

ⁱⁱⁱ Edward Markey faults Gabriel Gomez on campaign financing [Source: <http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2013/05/06/with-pledge-tack-markey-works-link-gomez-national-gop/Y0qknHhAedTBOOXIQ55NTP/story.html>]

^{iv} Democrat Ed Markey hammers rival Senate candidate Gabriel Gomez on refusal to sign People's Pledge [Source: http://www.masslive.com/politics/index.ssf/2013/05/democrat_ed_markey_hammers_gab.html]

^v Eric Garcetti's SuperPAC Pledge Gets Turned Down By Other LA Mayoral Candidates [Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/18/eric-garcetti-superpac-pledge-candidates_n_2503641.html]

^{vi} New Twist In L.A. Mayor's Race: The 'People's Pledge' [Source: <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/lanow/2013/01/la-mayor-race-peoples-pledge.html>]

^{vii} CitySpeak: The People's Pledge [Source: <http://www.lamag.com/citythink/citythinkblog/2013/01/18/cityspeak-the-peoples-pledge>]

^{viii} A worthy campaign pledge for Maryland [Source: http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-worthy-campaign-pledge-for-maryland/2013/11/16/c24a1ef6-4cac-11e3-be6b-d3d28122e6d4_story.html]

^{ix} Martha Coakley: I'll agree to people's pledge in Massachusetts race [Source: <http://washingtonexaminer.com/martha-coakley-ill-agree-to-peoples-pledge-in-massachusetts-race/article/2536409>]

^x Taveras calls for People's Pledge in governor's race [Source: [http://www.rifuture.org/taveras-calls-for-peoples-pledge-in-governors-race.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+rifuture+\(Rhode+Island's+Future\)\]](http://www.rifuture.org/taveras-calls-for-peoples-pledge-in-governors-race.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+rifuture+(Rhode+Island's+Future)])

^{xi} Following Shaheen, Shea-Porter asks her GOP opponents to take ‘People’s Pledge’ [Source: <http://www.wmur.com/political-scoop/following-shaheen-sheaporter-asks-her-gop-opponents-to-take-peoples-pledge/25376296>]

^{xii} The AP-National Constitution Center Poll. [Source: http://ap-gfkipoll.com/main/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/AP-NCC-Poll-August-GfK-2012-Topline-FINAL_1st-release.pdf]

^{xiii} Poll: Strong support for campaign spending limits [Source: <http://news.yahoo.com/poll-strong-support-campaign-spending-limits-120557612--election.html>]

^{xiv} Seven in 10 Would Send Super PACs Packing [Source: <http://www.langerresearch.com/uploads/1135a3SuperPACs.pdf>]

^{xv} Support For Reform Of Corporate Political Spending Practice [Source: <http://www.citizen.org/documents/bannon-communications-research-executive-summary.pdf>]

^{xvi} Revolt Against Washington and Corrupted Politics: New battleground survey shows how members championing change on money in politics gain an edge in anti-incumbent time [Source: <http://campaignmoney.org/sites/default/files/November2013PCAFDCorpsPolling.pdf>]