



Wisconsin State Assembly

For immediate release

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Kessler and Sherman Introduce Joint Resolution for Campaign Finance Reform

MADISON — Representatives Frederick Kessler (D-Milwaukee) and Gary Sherman (D-Port Wing) have introduced a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the United States Constitution to authorize Congress and the states to regulate campaign finance. This amendment would follow procedures in the Constitution that allow for a constitutional amendment to begin at the state level and gain the necessary two-thirds majority of ratifying states.

The 2002 Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act, also known as the McCain-Feingold Act, regulates the financing of political campaigns. Among its provisions, it prohibits political parties from raising or spending soft money, and corporations and labor organizations from using soft money to pay for issue ads shortly before an election.

“Phony issue ads have become the most corrupt use of money in politics,” Sherman explained. “Big money special interests use this loophole to launder cash into campaigns from otherwise illegal sources, like corporations.”

However, there is fear that the Supreme Court may strike down this law. If that occurred, future campaign finance reform would be impossible, allowing these special interests to continue to hijack campaigns and, essentially, buy elections.

This bill simply requests that the Congress of the United States propose an amendment to the federal constitution to authorize Congress and the states to regulate by law the financing of political campaigns. This joint resolution would also call on other states to take part in a similar request to Congress.

“This is a very simple proposal,” Kessler added. “All it says is that campaign finance reform is legal and constitutional. Then we can do our duty to protect American democracy from corruption.”

The bill will be circulated for cosponsors and then introduced for committee action.

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