



VOTING
RIGHTS
FOR ALL

VOTE

2024

VOTE



Strengthening Democracy for Election Day

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Campaign Legal Center (CLC) is a nonpartisan organization that advocates for every American to meaningfully participate in the democratic process.

We use tactics such as litigation, policy advocacy and communications to make systemic impacts at all levels of government.

We seek a future in which the American political process is accessible to all citizens. We advocate for every voter. CLC is committed to democracy, not to political parties or electoral results.



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PHOTO BY DAN LAMONT



From the President



Election Day 2024 — a day we at CLC have been preparing for since the end of the 2020 election and the horrific events of January 6, 2021 — is approaching quickly. Four years ago, new threats to our democracy seemed to spring out of nowhere, including bizarre schemes to foist slates of fake electors onto Congress, and baseless court challenges to election results.

In the years since 2020, we've also seen little letup in the threats CLC has been fighting for years: the overwhelming influence of big money in politics, efforts to marginalize or disenfranchise voters through barriers to the ballot and gerrymandering, as well as clear abuses of ethics laws that diminish public trust.

Our actions today are guided by lessons learned from experience:

- The urgent need to strengthen laws well before the election that protect the electoral process and uphold the best principles of our democracy.
- The need to strengthen existing partnerships, and forge new ones to better protect our democracy.

- Understanding that the danger to our democracy posed by bad actors seeking power by any means is very much alive and evolving.

We arrive at this moment better prepared and equipped to face whatever challenges arise as Election Day approaches. This is thanks in no small part to the steadfast support of those who understand the value of skilled legal expertise in the fights over voting and elections, redistricting, campaign finance transparency and ethics enforcement.

The work over the past year to strengthen our democracy in advance of the election includes victories in several important legal battles with high stakes for voters. CLC has engaged in these fights alongside those seeking equal access to the ballot and fair representation in their government. Wisconsin was one focal point for these efforts, where a successful lawsuit will allow voters in that state to go to the polls in 2024 under fair state senate and assembly districts for the first time since 2010. We've also continued to make our mark as a prominent campaign finance and ethics watchdog.

CLC's efforts to address weaknesses in our democracy exposed during the 2020 election have produced meaningful gains that greatly reduce the ability of bad actors to manipulate the electoral process. These include new comprehensive laws enacted last year in Michigan that protect the will of the voters by bringing clarity to election laws, and making elections there more secure.

CLC has also used this time of preparation to increase our capacity to partner and strategize with like-minded pro-democracy organizations in defense of voters and our elections. This sets the stage for a robust legal response as needed in some of the most closely contested states, as well as on the national level. We are now a ninety-person-strong organization, laser-focused on the challenges our democracy faces.

As the stories in this report show, CLC continues to seek ways to partner with voters and advocates fighting for a more representative, responsive and accountable government.

Our best hope for success lies in the continued growth of these relationships. Only then can the experience, knowledge and passion of our dedicated election law attorneys and policy experts be fully set to the task of creating a more perfect union in 2024 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Trevor Potter
President & Founder

Subscribe to Trevor Potter's newsletter at TrevorPotter.com or on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/in/trevorpotter)



PHOTO BY MARTIN H. SIMON



Areas of Focus

Campaign Finance

Voters have a right to know which wealthy special interests are spending big money to secretly influence our votes and our government to rig the political system in their favor.

Ethics

Federal, state and local governments have a responsibility to enact and enforce clear ethical guidelines and laws. Only then can public officials adequately navigate potential conflicts, and be held accountable when they break the public's trust.

Redistricting

In our elections, every voice should be heard, and every vote should count equally. Elections should be determined by voters, but when politicians rig our voting maps, they can pick their own voters instead of voters picking their politicians.

Voting and Elections

In our elections, every voice must be heard, and every vote must count. Voting should be accessible for all citizens, and our laws should promote participation in our democracy, and instill trust in our elections.

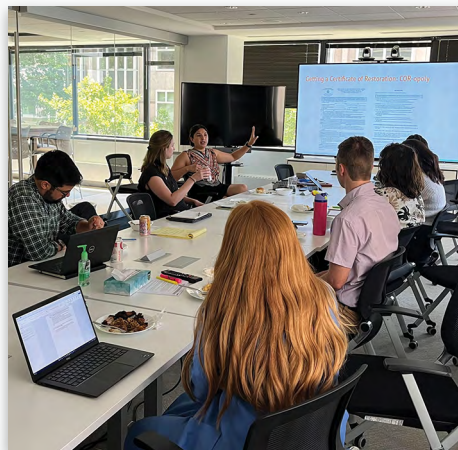
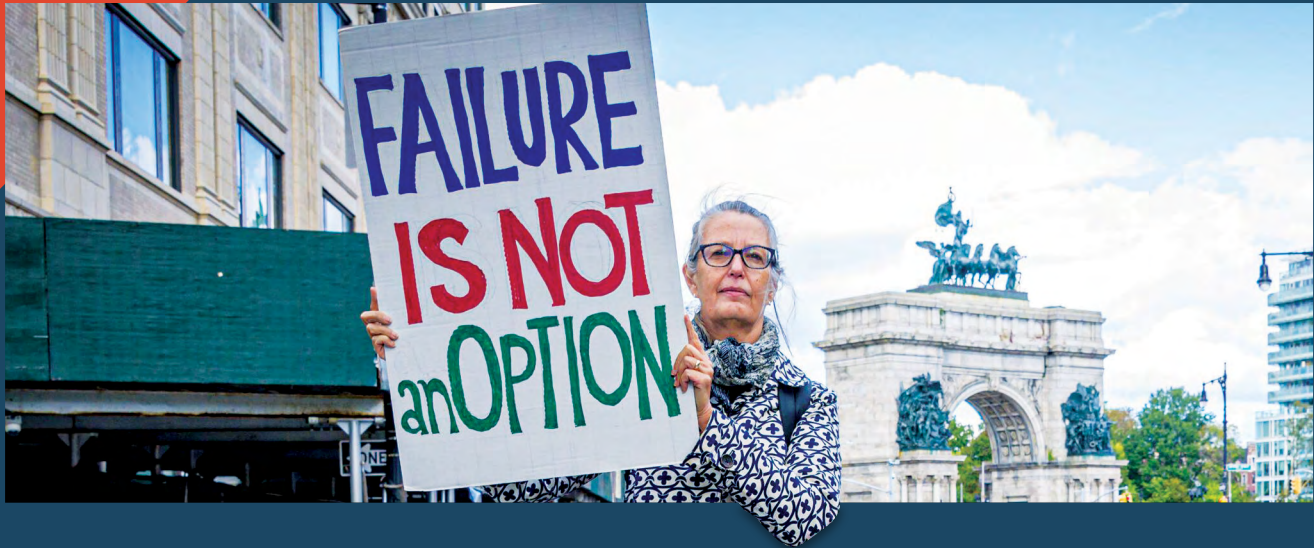


PHOTO BY DAN LAMONT



Taking Action to Stop 2024 Election Threats

PROTECTING ELECTIONS IN MICHIGAN

In 2023, pro-democracy advocates in Michigan, in partnership with CLC, successfully supported and lobbied for the passage of major pro-democracy laws to help ensure that the Great Lakes State would be ready for the 2024 election:

- Election laws were updated to ensure that presidential election procedures would reflect the will of the state's voters, and comply with the Electoral Count Reform Act (ECRA) of 2022. The ECRA safeguards the results of presidential elections. CLC played a crucial leadership role in the campaign to pass this law in Congress, and we now lead the effort to make sure states can meet the law's requirements.
- For the first time, clear rules around contesting Michigan election results in court were established.
- A new law was enacted to protect state election workers by prohibiting threats and harassment.

o o o

“Partnering with CLC on technical expertise and legislative strategy was critical to successfully aligning Michigan’s election laws with the Electoral Count Reform Act. Our shared work signals an affirmation of the enduring cause to keep resilient the pivotal role states play in protecting the people’s votes from those seeking to overturn elections governed by the rule of law.”

MATT PATTON, STATE POLICY STRATEGIST, MICHIGAN, PROTECT DEMOCRACY

Michigan is just one of more than 10 states where CLC is working to ensure that the electoral process is secure, and voters are protected. Another example of this advocacy comes from the state of Nevada, where CLC and our local partners celebrated the enactment of a law we strongly supported in 2023 to protect election workers from threats and harassment.

CLC has also pushed for more states to allow the processing and counting of absentee ballots before Election Day, which reduces potential uncertainty and opportunities for misinformation caused by delays in reporting results.

CLC's coordination with pro-democracy partners in our priority states and on the national level will continue through Election Day. We stand ready to stop any attempts to disenfranchise voters or derail the electoral process.

THE THREAT OF AI IN OUR ELECTIONS

It's becoming increasingly clear that AI tools can be used to easily generate and spread political communications that are deceptive or fraudulent. This could undermine voters' ability to assess the credibility and authenticity of the ads and other messaging attempting to influence their votes. CLC President Trevor Potter raised these concerns in testimony before Congress, calling for action on several critical fronts:

- Increasing the Federal Election Commission's authority to guard against election fraud.
- Passing a new law prohibiting deceptive and fraudulent use of AI.
- Expanding existing campaign finance disclosure requirements.



PHOTO BY MARTIN H. SIMON

Trevor Potter testifying before the U.S. Senate Committee on Rules and Administration at a hearing titled, "AI and the Future of Our Elections," September 27, 2023.



Trusted Partner of Communities Fighting for Equal Representation and the Freedom to Vote in 2024

CLC is committed to working with voters who fight for equal access to the ballot and fair voting maps that give every voter an equal voice and opportunity to elect leaders who will best serve their community.

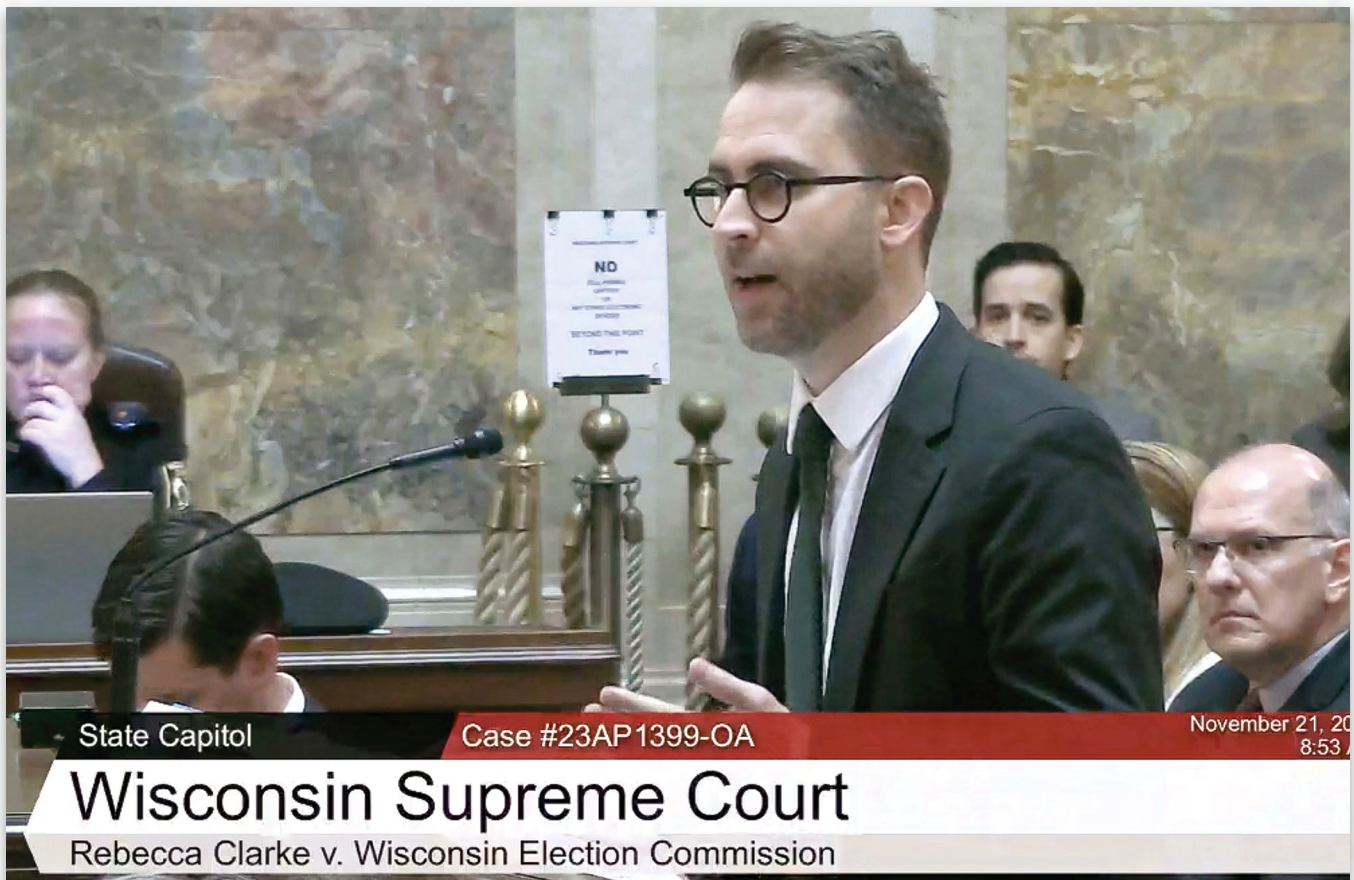
No voter should be denied the opportunity to fully participate in the democratic process — but Black, Latino and Native American voters continue to disproportionately bear the brunt of laws that undermine this fundamental freedom.

Progress made on these issues in 2023 means millions of voters have a more equitable and meaningful impact on our democracy.

VICTORY FOR WISCONSIN VOTERS

Nineteen Wisconsin voters filed a lawsuit on August 2, 2023, challenging the state's badly gerrymandered legislative district map. CLC and our co-counsel represented these voters in court, the latest legal skirmish in a battle dating back to 2010, when politicians drew voting maps behind closed doors that essentially guaranteed one-party control of the state legislature.

The state Supreme Court ruled in December 2023 that the district map violated the state constitution, and ordered a new map to be drawn, giving Wisconsin voters their first chance at fair representation in state government in 14 years. Gov. Tony Evers signed a fair map into law on February 19, 2024.



Mark Gaber, CLC Senior Director of Redistricting, delivering oral argument on behalf of CLC's clients before the Wisconsin Supreme Court on November 21, 2023.



“Having excellent legal counsel was critical to the success of restoring our democracy in the state of Wisconsin. Now the future is brighter, and we have fair maps, thanks to the excellent legal work of Campaign Legal Center and other legal partners. This is a huge step forward for the great state of Wisconsin. You have restored the faith of many.”

**DR. RUBEN ANTHONY, CLC CLIENT, URBAN LEAGUE OF GREATER MADISON,
PRESIDENT & CEO**

VICTORY FOR LATINO VOTERS IN WASHINGTON'S YAKIMA VALLEY

Latino voters, represented by CLC, won a lawsuit in August 2023 challenging a voting map that denied the large and growing Latino community in Washington State's Yakima Valley an opportunity to elect representatives of their choice. The lawsuit challenged the state legislative map under Section 2 of the federal Voting Rights Act, and the ruling required new, fair maps to be drawn.



PHOTO BY DAN LAMONT

CLC redistricting litigation team in front of federal courthouse, Seattle, Washington: (from left to right) Mark Gaber, Annabelle Harless, Ben Phillips, Aseem Mulji, Simone Leeper.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SUSAN SOTO PALMER

CLC client Susan Soto Palmer is a Yakima, Washington, resident who has advocated for years on behalf of the Latino community — a voice for voters who will finally have a fair shot at equal representation in state government.



“I am so thankful to have had CLC as a partner in pursuit of equal representation for Latino voters in the Yakima Valley, which we achieved for the first time last year. The impact of CLC’s steady investment of legal skills, time and talent has been integral to achieving meaningful results and moving our community forward.”

**SUSAN SOTO PALMER, COMMUNITY
ADVOCATE AND CLC CLIENT**

PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS IN NORTH DAKOTA, VIRGINIA BEACH, ARIZONA AND KANSAS

North Dakota

In a state with a long history of discrimination against Native American voters, Native advocates in North Dakota are celebrating federal court rulings that represent big wins for fair representation. Taken together, the latest rulings in *Turtle Mountain et al v. Howe* and *Walen v. Burgum* mean Native American voters have a genuine opportunity to elect members of their community to the state government in 2024.

CLC has been honored to partner with the Native American Rights Fund (NARF) and other counsel in representing North Dakota tribes: the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, Spirit Lake Tribe and the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara (MHA) Nation.



PHOTO COURTESY THE NATIVE AMERICAN RIGHTS FUND

Collette Brown and Doug Yankton of the Spirit Lake Tribe, June 2023.

Virginia Beach

Black, Latino and Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities achieved a victory in 2023 that gives them a fair chance at representation in Virginia's largest city.

Representing voters from these communities, CLC argued that the city's decades-old at-large election system denied communities of color an opportunity to elect representatives of their choice. Federal courts agreed, and the City Council in 2023 adopted a court-ordered election system and voting map.

Arizona

CLC clients — Living United for Change in Arizona (LUCHA), the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), Arizona Students' Association (ASA) and Arizona Democracy Resource Center (ADRC) — stopped anti-voter provisions of two Arizona laws that targeted Latino and Native American voters in the state.

The federal court ruling includes the removal of burdensome and discriminatory voter registration requirements, allows the use of tribal ID for voting and prevents illegal voter purges within 90 days of an election.

Kansas

VoteAmerica and the Voter Participation Center, represented by CLC, successfully challenged state laws that imposed unconstitutional restrictions on their nonpartisan civic engagement activities. These include assisting voters through registration drives and absentee ballot distribution.



Restoring the Freedom to Vote

Millions of Americans have lost the freedom to vote due to past felony convictions. Complicated state laws, misinformation and poor administration create conditions that make it very difficult to navigate the voting rights restoration process.

These barriers are particularly evident in states like Alabama and Tennessee, where CLC's Restore Your Vote team has partnered with local civil rights advocates, such as Greater Birmingham Ministries and Free Hearts Tennessee, to assist voters seeking to restore their freedom to vote.



Left: Ellen Boettcher, Restore Your Vote Legal Fellow, canvassing in Mobile, Alabama



“CLC has been instrumental in helping GBM protect the restoration rights of formerly incarcerated individuals and ensuring ballot access for currently incarcerated individuals. We couldn’t do this work without them!”

TARI D. WILLIAMS, ORGANIZING DIRECTOR, GREATER BIRMINGHAM MINISTRIES

ADVOCATING FOR THE CREATION OF STATE VOTING RIGHTS ACTS

The U.S. Supreme Court's disastrous 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* severely crippled the federal Voting Rights Act — the landmark civil rights law that has been responsible for more progress on voting rights for Black Americans and other communities of color than any law in history.

In response to that ruling, a number of states have taken action by passing their own voting rights acts, with the goal of restoring many of the protections formerly afforded by federal law, and even going above and beyond the federal VRA in protecting the freedom to vote.

CLC and a coalition of pro-democracy groups successfully advocated in 2023 for the enactment of a voting rights act in Connecticut, while also making progress toward similar legislation in Michigan and Maryland.



CLC Senior Legal Counsel for Voting Rights Lata Nott testifying in Annapolis, Maryland, in favor of legislation to establish the Maryland Voting Rights Act.



FIGHTING FOR Accountability and Transparency in Election Spending

Transparency in Arizona

In 2022, Arizona's voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 211, a dark money transparency law, which CLC played an instrumental role in drafting. Almost immediately, the legislature and others filed three separate lawsuits against the new law.

Our role in Arizona continues as lawyers for the defense in these three court battles — two in state court and one in federal — representing Voters' Right to Know, the political action committee that wrote and campaigned for Proposition 211. So far, courts have handed down several crucial rulings upholding the law in all three cases, but the legal battles are not over.

This year marks the start of the implementation of Proposition 211's robust disclosure requirements, which give voters the information they have a right to know: the true source behind big spending on election-related ads attempting to influence their votes and our government. CLC is working in an advocacy role to see that the law is properly implemented. CLC believes that the new Arizona transparency law can be a model for other states across the country.



PHOTO BY GRAEME SLOAN/SIPA USA VIA ALAMY LIVE NEWS

Rep. George Santos (R-NY).

Ethics & Disclosure in Congress

On January 9, 2023, CLC became the first organization to file campaign finance complaints against now-former Rep. George Santos. CLC's complaints followed our examination of Rep. Santos' financial reports, which revealed numerous inconsistencies and falsified data. The U.S. Department of Justice opened an investigation into Rep. Santos after CLC referred this complaint to the DOJ's Public Integrity Section. Santos was indicted by a federal grand jury in October 2023.

George Santos was expelled from the U.S. House of Representatives on December 1, 2023, after an investigation of his wrongdoing by the House Ethics Committee.

Accountability at the Federal Election Commission

As a leading FEC watchdog, CLC aims to ensure that the agency actually enforces federal campaign finance laws. Having effective and meaningful oversight for federal campaigns is particularly important during an election year, when vast sums are being spent, often anonymously, to influence voters' decisions. Unfortunately, the FEC has a history of inaction.

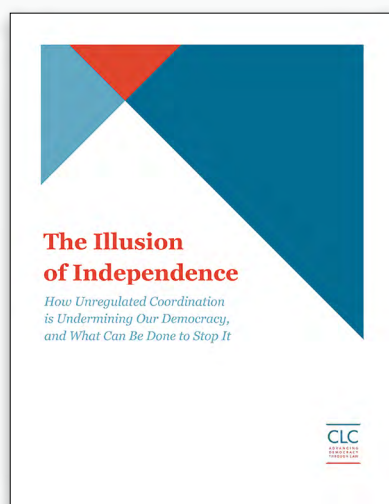
When the FEC fails to act in response to clear instances of wrongdoing, CLC, in partnership with our allies, seeks accountability through the courts, as permitted by law. This can take the form of suing the FEC or suing alleged wrongdoers directly. In 2023, federal courts in two ongoing cases affirmed the value of this strategy by ruling against the agency over its handling of campaign finance complaints.

End *Citizens United PAC v. FEC* involves allegations that the 2020 Trump campaign illegally raised money for an aligned super PAC. In *Common Cause Georgia v. FEC*, an organization called True the Vote and the Georgia Republican party are accused of violating transparency requirements and restrictions as part of a scheme to influence the 2021 U.S. Senate runoff elections in Georgia.

Rulings in these cases in 2023 eliminated procedural loopholes that the FEC uses to withhold information about its decisions, and made it much harder for the FEC to shirk its enforcement responsibilities or fail to hold lawbreakers to account going forward.



CLC's Adav Noti testifying before the FEC.



First-of-its-Kind Report Details the Dangers of Illegal Coordination

Political candidates are forbidden by law to coordinate their activities with outside interests like supportive super PACs, yet this unlawful activity has become increasingly common in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's disastrous 2010 *Citizens United* decision.

CLC's campaign finance team released a first-of-its-kind report in 2023 on illegal coordination, which undermines voters' ability to equitably and meaningfully participate in our democracy.



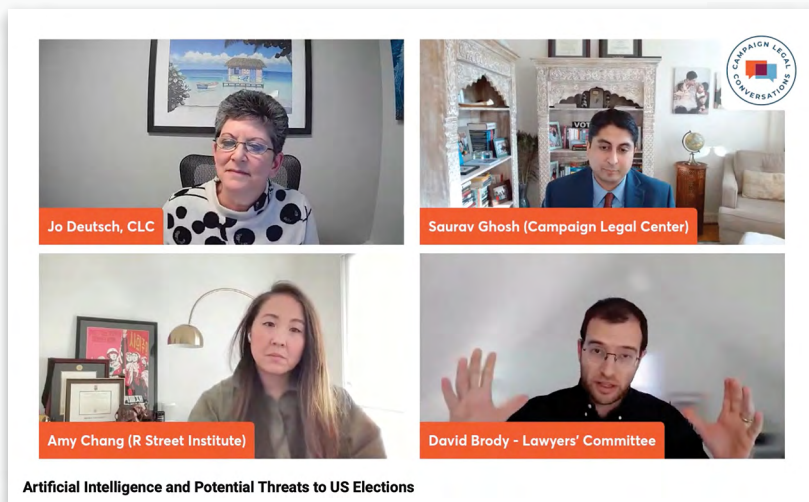
CONTRIBUTING TO the Pro-Democracy Dialogue

Campaign Legal Conversations: A Space for Perspectives from Across the Pro-Democracy Movement

Democracy is at its strongest when diverse voices collaborate. In 2023, CLC launched Campaign Legal Conversations, an ongoing virtual event series that brings together experts, change-makers and authors to exchange ideas, foster mutual understanding and find common ground.



Campaign Legal Conversations launched on September 28, 2023. The first event was produced in collaboration with The Washington Post.

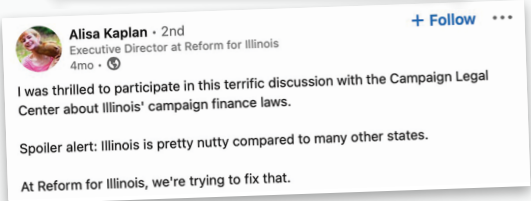


“Democracy Decoded”: A Vital Information Resource for Democracy Advocates and Concerned Citizens

CLC produced a third season of our award-winning podcast, “Democracy Decoded,” in 2023. Season 3 focuses on democracy at the state and local levels, and how we can better protect the right of all citizens to have their voices heard, and the ability to hold their leaders accountable.



CLC Communications Director Kimberly Hall, Multimedia Manager Casey Atkins, Senior Communications Manager Brendan Quinn, and Legal Counsel for Redistricting and podcast host Simone Leeper at the 2023 Webby Awards ceremony in New York City.



“Democracy Decoded” has been the recipient of the Webby Award for Public Service and Activism Podcasts, Webby People’s Voice Award for Public Service and Activism Podcasts, MarCom Platinum Award, dotcom Platinum Award and the Davey Gold Award.



STANDING UP FOR High Ethics Standards in Every Branch of Government

Congress

In early 2023, new leadership in Congress attempted to pass rules that threatened to severely undermine the Office of Congressional Ethics, the only independent ethics body in Congress.

CLC advocated strongly against these rule changes, and leaders on both sides of the aisle from the U.S. House of Representatives eventually took steps to make sure OCE could still perform its essential role of providing timely and transparent investigations of ethics complaints. In 2023, this included an investigation of Rep. George Santos.

Following the 2024 election, CLC will be focused on protecting the OCE from damaging rule changes at the start of the next Congress.

Roll Call

“Despite fears agency could be crippled, House fills ethics posts”

“Added Kedric Payne, a former OCE deputy chief counsel: ‘There is definitely a ray of light on the OCE right now.’ Payne, who serves as vice president, general counsel and senior director of ethics of the Campaign Legal Center, said that ‘it looks as though the board will be up and running and will have a good team there to continue OCE’s work.’”



CLC’s Kedric Payne testified before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee on May 2, 2023. His testimony explained the need for a U.S. Supreme Court code of ethics and an internal ethics enforcement body that can help justices navigate ethics rules, and investigate allegations of ethics violations.

Kedric’s testimony noted numerous instances of former and current justices taking privately sponsored trips, and called for more robust and detailed reporting requirements in the name of transparency at the Court.

U.S. Supreme Court

CLC believes that the highest court in the land ought to be held to the highest standards of ethical conduct.

Supreme Court ethics was thrust into the spotlight in 2023, following a series of reports on ethics lapses at the Court by ProPublica, an independent, nonprofit investigative news organization. These included numerous instances of Justice Clarence Thomas failing to report gifts of luxury travel financed by politically connected billionaires. For expert opinions on these scandals, the ProPublica journalists turned to CLC’s ethics team, who are quoted throughout this reporting.

CLC urged the Judicial Conference, the administrative body overseeing the federal courts, to refer the allegations against Justice Thomas to the U.S. Department of Justice.



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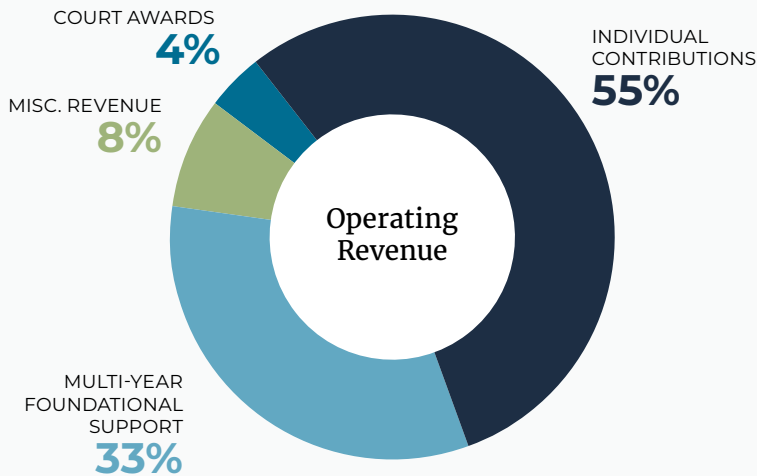
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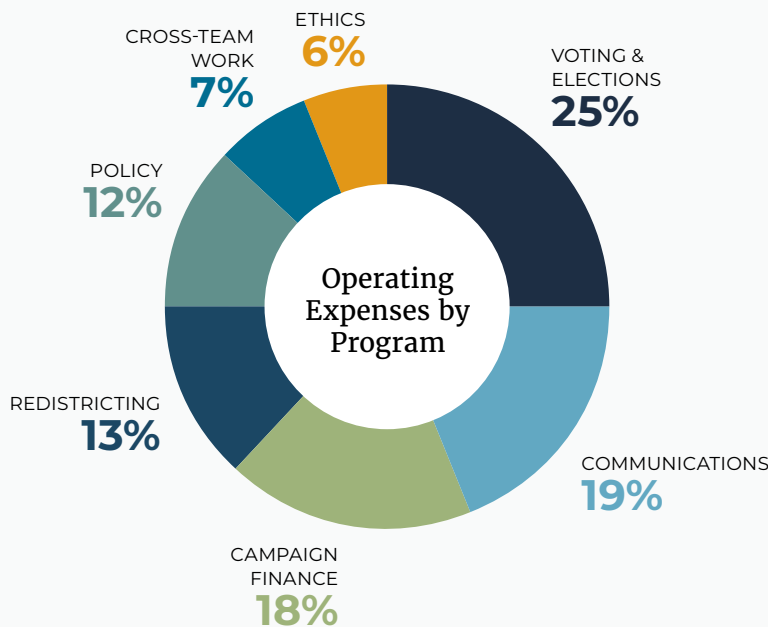
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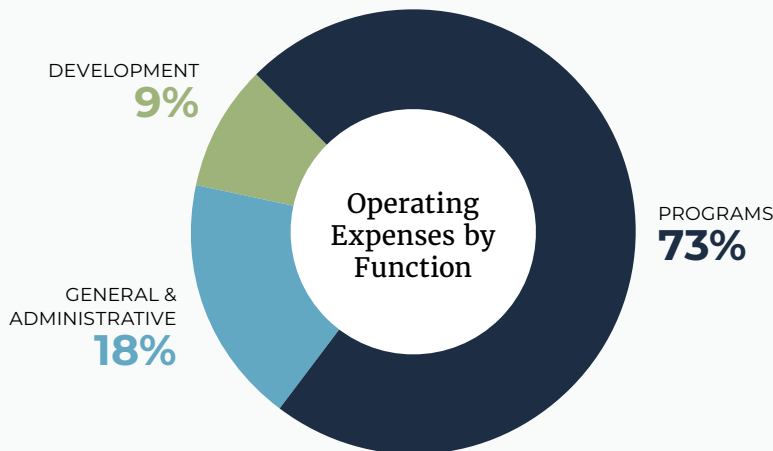
Individual Contributions	\$12,329,213
Multi-year Foundation Support	\$7,521,335
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$1,835,650
Court Awards	\$875,807
Total*	\$22,562,005

*much of this was multi-year support designated for use in future years



OPERATING EXPENSES BY PROGRAM

Voting & Elections	\$3,318,580
Communications	\$2,440,853
Campaign Finance	\$2,293,197
Redistricting	\$1,760,418
Policy	\$1,562,010
Cross-team Work	\$900,491
Ethics	\$777,672
Total	\$13,053,221



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Programs	\$13,053,221
General & Administrative	\$3,162,284
Development	\$1,575,612
Total	\$17,791,117

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