

Letter to the Editor:

The campaign finance reform legislation (Senate Bill 1466) passed recently by the Illinois General Assembly is meaningful reform and a good first step on the road to the changes needed in Illinois elections.

The League of Women Voters of Illinois has been working along with other reform groups for over a decade to achieve meaningful campaign finance reform in Illinois, but has been met with great resistance, particularly in regard to campaign contribution limits, on the part of the Illinois General Assembly.

By signing this legislation, Gov. Quinn can make this a landmark bill. For the first time in Illinois history, there will be limits on the amount of money flowing into the political system that can be used to fuel political campaigns. Contributions from individuals, unions, corporation, and political action committees will be capped at reasonable levels. The legislation also calls for limits on how much legislative and party leaders can give to candidates in primary races. It contains other notable reform features including strong provisions to improve disclosure and enforcement mechanisms.

There has been criticism that this legislation does not go far enough because the political party and legislative caucus committees are not limited in the money they can transfer to candidates in the general election. However, having limits in the primary is an important step. It will encourage more people to challenge an incumbent or party-backed candidate and help level the playing field for challengers.

Of course, it would be desirable to have limits on legislative and party leaders in the general election. The League and other reform coalition members will continue to work diligently toward this reform. However, the countless hours of negotiation between legislators and CHANGE Illinois produced legislation that will make our state's democracy stronger.

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