To: Interested Parties  
From: End Citizens United  
Date: July 20, 2017  
Re: Taking on Money in Politics Can Help You Win

Summary:

➢ A conversation on money in politics will help Democrats win.  
  o Putting Republicans on the defensive and fighting to change a rigged system moves key voters

➢ Messages on money in politics breaks through to swing voters that other conventional Democratic messages do not  
  o Messages on money in politics are MORE effective at increasing Democratic candidate’s vote share among key swing voters than traditional Democratic messaging  
  o This issue can help Democrats unlock the door with swing voters that are key in the midterms – Independents, white working class voters, rural voters, seniors, and Hispanics  
  o This issue also motivates base Democratic voters and progressives and so can be used for both base motivation and persuasion

➢ Voters identify money in politics as an important problem (that is getting worse) that affects their everyday lives, and believe addressing it is as important as “lowering healthcare costs” and “creating jobs and increasing incomes”

➢ Any charges of hypocrisy can be effectively rebutted

➢ Money in politics allows Democrats to be FOR real reform at a time when voters are still hungry for change.

Main Takeaway Message For Candidates:

The influx of big money in our elections threatens our very democracy. Too many politicians – including my opponent – are bought and paid for by special interests, while the voices of everyday Americans are being drowned out. I’ll fight to end the rigged system that puts special interests above you. I’ll work to stop the unlimited special interest money in our elections and close loopholes that allow foreign interests to secretly influence our elections, to restore your voice.

The Current Political System is Rigged - And Voters Know It

Voters today feel more shut out than ever – that politicians are beholden to special interests and are working for those who write the biggest check. The flood of unlimited and undisclosed money that has been corrupting our system since the 2010 Supreme Court decision, Citizens United, has only intensified this feeling.

End Citizens United’s national and state breakthrough research and polling illustrates that voters are willing to reward Democratic candidates committed to changing the rigged system. Voters clearly understand that money in politics affects their everyday lives. Survey after survey shows that messages about money in politics are more effective at increasing support among swing voters than traditional Democratic messages.

End Citizens United’s research can help candidates craft winning messages that connect with swing voters. Additional message guidance and detailed information can be provided by request.
Money in Politics Unlocks the Door to Talking to Independent and Swing Voters

In multiple statewide battleground polls, ECU found that a battery of “money in politics” messages focused on changing the rigged system and getting money out of politics was more effective at increasing a Democratic candidate’s vote share (particularly among Independents, rural voters and Hispanic voters) than was a battery of traditional Democratic messages. These messages helped unlock the door to these key voters. In fact, Independents in three key battleground states, increased support for the Democratic candidate by a significantly higher margin.

Impact of Money in Politics Msgs vs. Conventional Dem Msgs

Money in politics messages included:
- unlimited, undisclosed money in politics;
- foreign money in politics; corruption; pay to play; loss of trust in the system

Traditional messages included:
- Creating jobs and raising wages; women’s health; protecting Social Security and Medicare, college affordability, veterans

Additionally, money in politics-based messages resulted in significant movement among non-college voters, Hispanics, and rural voters. It is clear that this issue can be a very effective persuasion tool among the very key voters we know we need to talk to in 2018 and beyond.

Groups Most Impacted by Money in Politics Messages

This movement occurred when money in politics messages were framed as both attacks against Republicans (in Nevada) and positive pro-reform planks for Democrats (in Wisconsin and Montana).

Case Study: In Nevada’s 2016 Senate race, Republican Joe Heck remained popular and maintained a lead in nearly every poll. After ECU polling showed money in politics messages moved key blocks of voters, ECU ran three weeks of statewide television illustrating Heck being in the pocket of special interests. Polling after the television ads aired that found Democrat
A Majority of Voters Believes Money in Elections Affects Them and Their Families

Voters do not need to be convinced that money in elections matters. In fact, 65% of voters say that special interests spending money in elections affects them or their families. Voters consistently rate reducing the influence of special interest money in politics as a priority, on par with “creating jobs and increasing incomes” and “lowering healthcare costs.”

Among voters age 65 and older, this issue is a significantly higher priority than reducing taxes, creating jobs, improving education and reforming immigration. Seniors, in midterms, already tilt towards Republican candidates. A Democratic incumbent running who emphasizes this priority issue will have a solid inroad to a tough, yet crucial constituency in a midterm election. Among base Democrats, no issue ranks higher than special interest money in politics.

Moreover, voters easily make the connection between special interests donating to candidates and other entities as a reason why prescription prices are high, why there is gridlock in DC and why they distrust government and the system.

Taking the Lead On Reform and Money in Politics

Voters across the ideological spectrum and among all demographic groups move towards a Democratic candidate who attacks a Republican for being “in the back pocket of special interests who are spending unlimited amounts of money to elect him to do their bidding.”

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1 Full text of attack: “The Democrat says the Republican is in the pocket of special interests who are spending unlimited amounts of money to elect him to do their bidding. The Democrat says this flood of money is corrupt because it means the Republican is looking out for the special interests supporting him, rather than real people who want lower prescription drug prices and higher wages. The Democrat says we need to change our corrupt political system so it works for real people, by limiting how much special
Key targets move decisively towards the Democrat, including white working class voters (+14), seniors (+14) and Independents (+16). Even among voters who initially support a generic Republican, the Democrat gains more than 20 points.

**Attacks of being hypocritical can be effectively rebutted.** Incumbents might be wary of opening the door to charges of hypocrisy if they discuss the effects of special interest money in politics. After all, incumbents themselves are taking PAC checks, sometimes benefiting from SuperPAC spending in their races and taking meetings with lobbyists. From multiple surveys, it is clear that those charges are easily rebutted by a straightforward call for a change in the system and an overt demand to defeat Republican candidates who want to continue allowing unlimited special interest money in elections.

**Fighting over this issue is good territory for a Democratic incumbent.** In a simulated dialogue, a Democratic candidate can trade barbs with the Republican, including being counterpunched with a harsh attack that utilizes the hypocrite language as well as an added accusation of getting rich in office, and still come out on top.

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**IF ATTACKED, DO:**
- Say you are the only candidate who wants to change the system.
- Say we must defeat candidates like my opponent who wants to keep letting special interests spend unlimited amounts of money.
- Say you want the PEOPLE to have their voices back.

**IF ATTACKED, DO NOT:**
- Defend the way things are.
- Try to explain the need for money to run your campaign.
- Say you have to take the money because you refuse to unilaterally disarm.
- Say you have no legal control over SuperPACs.

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**Voters Hate the Status Quo – Provide A Solution**

In a cycle where Democrats find themselves being criticized for being obstructionists and defending existing policy on health care, taxes and trade, the issue of money politics gives Democratic incumbents an opportunity to advocate for real and meaningful change, and differentiate themselves from the rest of the “swamp” in DC. As a matter of fact, support for limiting the amount of money in elections actually tests above some top testing Democratic policy priorities:

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**interests can spend on our elections and requiring that all political donations are public.**

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2 GOP Counterpunch text “The Republican says that the Democrat is a hypocrite. The Republican says the Democrat has been in Washington for years, has taken takes thousands from special interests and corporations, and has even gotten richer while doing so. Plus, the Republican says that if anyone is corrupt it is the Democrat who lets big unions and liberal special interests spend secret and unlimited amounts of money on his behalf. The Republican says these attacks are just politics as usual.”
National 2016 polling found intense support for a proposal to reduce the influence of money in politics and that it generated even stronger support than other popular Democratic proposals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Strong Support</th>
<th>Somewhat Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limiting the amount of money that corporations can donate to political campaigns. Eliminating secret donations “dark money”</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending tax breaks for companies that ship jobs overseas</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guaranteeing family medical leave insurance so that employees can take time off to care for a new child or sick relative</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raising the minimum wage</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is an issue we can be FOR rather than another in the litany, which we must oppose. It is a “change” issue that taps into the cynical voters’ desire to upend a system that drowns out their own voices.

### Specific language to use on money in politics:

**Define the problem:**
- My opponent is bought and paid for in the pocket of special interests.
- The problem is worse than it used to be because special interests can now give unlimited amounts of secret money to influence government and elections.

**Describe the impact:**
- Special interests have too much influence at the expense of regular people which means higher prescription prices, etc.
- Secret donations mean foreign companies and governments can influence American elections without the public knowing.

**Provide a solution:**
- I will fight against the influence of special interests that control Washington and make sure the people have a voice.
- I will close the loophole that allows foreign interests to secretly influence American elections. We must protect our Democracy.

### Wrapping Up – Making Your Case

The influx of big money in our elections threatens our very democracy. Too many politicians – including my opponent – are bought and paid for by special interests, while the voices of everyday Americans are being drowned out. I’ll fight to end the rigged system that puts special interests above you. I’ll work to stop the unlimited special interest money in our elections and close loopholes that allow foreign interests to secretly influence our elections, to restore your voice.