



## Media Release

For Immediate Release  
February 22, 2006

Contacts: Sharon Kennedy (617) 695-0369  
Stuart Comstock-Gay (617) 624-3900 X16

### **Spending Cap Case Coming Before U.S. Supreme Court**

**Thirteen amicus briefs, with various arguments, support constitutionality of campaign expenditure limits**

**Washington, D.C.** - Next week, on February 28, 2006, the United States Supreme Court will hear arguments in *Randall v. Sorrell*, a case to determine whether a Vermont state law setting strict campaign spending and donation guidelines, is Constitutional. Vermont Attorney General William Sorrell and National Voting Rights Institute lawyer Brenda Wright will argue before the Justices in defense of a state law which limits the amount that can be spent by candidates seeking office.

A broad range of interested parties have filed amicus curiae briefs in support of the state's limits. Brief signers span the political spectrum, and include a bi-partisan group of 13 U.S. Senators and Representatives, former U.S. Senators Bill Bradley (D-NJ) and Alan Simpson (R-WY), 17 state Attorneys General, several state Secretaries of State, 13 current and former elected state judges and justices, several candidates who have run as challengers in Congressional elections, nearly two dozen democracy reform and civil rights organizations, and many others.

Among the arguments presented in the briefs:

- The Center for Democracy and Election Management at American University tells us that evidence from democracies around the world suggests that campaign expenditure limits can strengthen democracy.
- Former U.S. Senators Bradley and Simpson express their concern that because fundraising takes so much time, the quality of representation has declined.

- The Attorneys General of 17 states say that states need the room to experiment with expenditure limits in order to combat rampant corruption and other problems.
- A group of former ACLU leaders argue that the inability to place ceilings on campaign expenditures places candidates in a prisoner's dilemma, where they are forced to raise and spend campaign funds, even when they don't wish to do so.
- A bi-partisan group of challengers for Congressional races tells us that unlimited spending has served as an incredibly effective incumbency-protection system.
- And a group of civil rights organizations says that unlimited campaign spending is the single greatest obstacle to exclusion of communities of color from the political process.

Additional briefs address other interests. All of the amicus briefs, as well as the briefs of the parties, are available at [www.nvri.org/campaignspending/cs\\_supremecourt.html](http://www.nvri.org/campaignspending/cs_supremecourt.html). In addition to the briefs, brief excerpts from the briefs can be found as well.

In addition to the broad professional and advocacy support for expenditure limits, a recent poll commissioned by NVRI shows that the public overwhelmingly supports campaign spending limits as a means to press candidates to spend more time with voters, rather than merely raising money. In the poll, conducted in late November 2005, 87% of voters supported such limits. That survey can be found at <http://www.demos.org/page422.cfm>.

The National Voting Rights Institute is a Boston-based, non-partisan, non-profit organization committed to making real the promise of American democracy that meaningful political participation and power should be accessible to all regardless of economic or social status. NVRI represents a number of organizations and individuals defending the constitutionality of the Vermont law.

Copies of the NVRI brief, as well as all of the filings in this case, are available on the NVRI website at [http://www.nvri.org/campaignspending/cs\\_supremecourt.html](http://www.nvri.org/campaignspending/cs_supremecourt.html).

-end-