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For Immediate Release

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As Abramoff Scandal Builds, Poll Shows Widespread Public Support for Campaign Spending Limits – Supreme Court to Hear Case in February ‘06

Results – available at <http://demos.org/campaignfinancesurvey> - reveal widespread concern about influence of money and political fundraising

Boston, MA – A Poll commissioned by the National Voting Rights Institute (NVRI) revealed overwhelming support for election campaign spending limits as a way of improving the fairness, honesty and integrity of elections.

A remarkable 87% of voters support caps on campaign spending. The poll indicates that voters expect a number of specific, positive outcomes if campaign spending limits are enacted, including candidates spending more time on their official duties and talking to voters about the issues rather than wealthy contributors. These opinions proved remarkably consistent across demographic, geographic, and partisan lines. Conducted by the Lake Research Group last month, the poll sampled 1,000 likely voters across the country.

The poll shows that, even before the Jack Abramoff scandal became red-hot, voters, by a wide margin, believe that large scale donors have too much influence in the political process and that ordinary voters are too often ignored. Further, voters across political lines think candidates spend too much money on campaigns: Democrats 71%; Republicans 66%; and Independents 73%. The poll goes on to show that voters across the board believe that if spending limits were passed, they would have greater faith in the integrity of elections. Seven out of ten voters believe that spending limits will diminish the potential for corruption and undue influence.

“These results show the campaign spending kettle is ready to boil. Voters are rightly worried about the impact of unlimited spending on the integrity of government, and there is great support for systemic changes. There is a broad and deep dissatisfaction with the status quo and a deep seated feeling that we should change the way our elections are paid for and how our elected officials spend their time,” said Stuart Comstock-Gay the Executive Director of NVRI.

On February 28, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear a case out of Vermont, *Randall v. Sorrell*, that raises the question whether states can pass laws that limit the amount of money candidates spend on political campaigns. If the Court upholds the law, it will be the first such law upheld since the Court ruled unconstitutional a Congressional spending limits law in 1976.

A full analysis of the poll results is available at the website for Demos, a public policy research organization: <http://demos.org/campaignfinancesurvey> .

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.

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