



## Citizens Launch Campaign for Open and Clean Government

**SIOUX FALLS, SD, January 28, 2008** -- An initiative to clean up state government and open up state contracts has been launched in South Dakota. South Dakotans for Open and Clean Government is leading the effort to promote the proposed ballot initiative that will change the face of South Dakota politics.

"We have widespread support from across the state for the South Dakota Open and Clean Government Act," said Jim Anderson, board member of the ballot committee. "This initiative contains sensible provisions that increases the voice of the people in state government and prevents opportunities for corruption in politics. It just makes sense."

The South Dakota Open and Clean Government Act would change the current law in five ways:

- Taxpayer funds could not be used to lobby or campaign for partisan political agendas, including increased taxes.
- Legislators would not be able to use their legislative positions to ensure "golden-parachute" jobs after their public service has ended.
- The "pay to play" system -- where contractors are forced to make campaign donations to elected officials in order to get a government contract -- would be outlawed.
- Recipients of no bid contracts would be contractually prohibited from donating to political campaigns while they hold a state contract and two years thereafter.
- A simple, searchable website with information on all state contracts over \$500, not including employment contracts, would be launched so citizens can know how their money is being spent.

"Much of the language in this initiative has been tried in other states with success. Even the federal government has a website to search federal contracts," said Anderson.

Tonchi Weaver, board member from Rapid City, said, "The average South Dakotan views politics and government with apathy and cynicism because of what they perceive as systemic corruption. This initiative will restrict what is seen as an incestuous relationship between elected officials, lobbyists, and contractors by inserting a degree of separation between public service and personal gain."

"Under this law, elected officials can still work together, testify before legislative committees, and lobby the legislature," said Weaver. "They cannot use your tax dollars to pay high-priced lobbyists to do their legislative work."

"It is time that we put the taxpayers of South Dakota first by implementing these sensible open and clean government measures," said Anderson.

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