



For Immediate Release

Ballot Committee Receives Generous Support From Across the State

SIOUX FALLS, SD, February 1, 2008 – The South Dakota Open and Clean Government Act ballot committee submitted its year end campaign finance report to the Secretary of State today showing tremendous support from contributors from across South Dakota.

Although the ballot committee just filed its paperwork in November, numerous contributors from across the state have already signaled their support. Among its most generous in-state donors was the South Dakota Conservative Action Council.

“The members of the South Dakota Conservative Action Council wholeheartedly support transparency and openness in government,” said Lee Breard, Executive Director. “We believe that the taxpayers of South Dakota who send their hard-earned money to Pierre should be able to see how that money is spent and make sure that money is used wisely.”

The momentum for the ballot initiative has grown in recent days as a legislators debate transparency at the capitol. “It seems like everyone in Pierre is talking about transparency in government,” said Dena Espenscheid, spokesperson for the committee. “While several bills on government transparency have been introduced in the legislature, the bills appear to be bogged down in partisan wrangling. We’re taking our case straight to the people.”

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.

The year end campaign finance report lists 25 donors to the cause as of December 31, 2007. In addition to those donors, Espenscheid says hundreds of citizens who want transparency and accountability from their government have sent commitment cards into the campaign office. This is in addition to the thousands of voters who have already signed the petition to place the measure on the November ballot.

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