



# Campaign Finance Reform Blast

Blast #15  
15 July 2017



The Denver Democracy for the People Initiative is an example of local campaign finance reform. The organizers are working to get the measure on the November ballot.

Anyone wishing to help gather signatures can contact Mark Mehringer at [mehringer@gmail.com](mailto:mehringer@gmail.com).

### Who Supports This Initiative?

[Represent.us](http://Represent.us) Metro Denver

[MayDay.us](http://MayDay.us) Colorado

[CleanSlateNow](http://CleanSlateNow) Action



## Denver May Vote this Fall on the Democracy for the People Initiative

[Organizers](#) are collecting signatures from registered voters in Denver to put the citizen-initiated ordinance on the November ballot. They will need just under 5,000 valid signatures by mid-August.

### What Will the Democracy for the People Initiative Do?

The Democracy for the People Initiative will change the laws governing Denver elections for Mayor, City Council, Clerk, Auditor, and Judge. It will increase transparency and set up a small-donation-matching program. Read about the initiative [here](#)

[DenverDemocracy.com](http://DenverDemocracy.com)

The initiative will update Denver campaign finance regulations to:

- Prohibit candidates from accepting contributions directly from corporations
- Require thorough disclosure of money spent on behalf of or against a candidate (commonly called "dark money")
- Reduce contribution limits that are uncommonly high compared to state elections

[This chart](#) compares current and proposed contribution limits. If candidates accept donation-matching funds, they will agree to lower contribution limits.

City Office	Current Contribution Limits	Proposed Contribution Limits	Proposed Contribution Limits for Candidates with Small Donor Matching
Mayor	\$3,000	\$1,000	\$500
Council Member	\$1,000	\$400	\$200
Council Member At Large	\$2,000	\$700	\$350
Clerk And Recorder	\$2,000	\$700	\$350
Auditor	\$2,000	\$700	\$350
Judge	\$2,000	\$700	N/A

### How Will the Matching Donation Program Work?

The initiative will create an optional small-donation-matching program for candidates who do not accept special-interest money and who agree to lower contribution limits. Qualified candidates will receive matching funds at a rate of 9:1 for each qualified donation, up to a maximum of \$50. This means a \$50 donation will be turned into \$500.

The program will be funded by \$2 Million per year from the general fund – an amount that is approximately 0.02% of Denver's annual budget, or about \$3 per year per resident.

In Denver, from 2012 to 2017, almost \$20 million was spent on elections. But only 18% of that money came from people actually living in Denver. In comparison, in a city that has a small-donation-matching program, like New York, we find that 71% of the money spent on their elections comes from residents – that is 4 times as much as Denver.

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