

THE GREEN WIRE

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Sen. Green Calls for Transparency in Campaigns

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – Sen. Timothy Green, D-Spanish Lake, introduced legislation yesterday that will make tracking contributions and lobbying efforts easier for the public.

“The voices of Missouri voters can’t compete with influential special interests,” Sen. Green said. “This bill will ensure additional transparency in campaigns.”

This bill will remove limits placed on campaign contributions to candidates and places them instead on independent committees, also called third-party committees.

Sen. Green said he introduced the bill, because special interests can contribute unlimited donations to third-party committees, which can then spend the money on behalf of candidates. In 2000, third-party committees spent and contributed over \$53 million. In 2002, third-party committees spent and contributed over \$42 million. In 2004, third-party committees spent and contributed more than \$63 million.

“When we placed limits on contributions to candidates, we thought we were going to curtail the amount of money flowing into political campaigns, but we just poured gasoline onto a burning fire instead,” Sen. Green said.

By eliminating the caps placed on candidate campaign committees and placing them on third-party committees, Sen. Green said the public would be able to find out exactly who spends what on whom.

Sen. Green said that currently, it is very difficult to find out what third-party committees spend on individual candidates. If those committees were placed under limits, the money would flow directly to the individual candidate committees, which the public could easily view the contributions.

“Campaign contribution limits did not stop the flow of money to campaigns but it did make it much harder to track the money,” Sen. Green said. Since 2000, the year that limits came into effect, third-party committees spent and contributed over \$158 million to Missouri campaigns.
