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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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August 28, 2002

REFORM GROUP APPLAUDS FEDERAL COURT DECISION

On behalf of the "Yes on Issue 11 Campaign," I applaud the decision once again of the 6th US Circuit Court of Appeals in their ruling regarding the constitutionality of strict finance limits that Akron voters approved in 1998. This is a victory for local reformers, for every Akron citizen who signed our petition and who voted for this measure and a victory for the common good.

The 6th Circuit Court's ruling is consistent with what local reformers have said since the moment we began defending this law -- that it's constitutional and a step in the right direction of getting corrupting big money out of local politics.

The ruling is also consistent with a growing trend of citizen initiatives and judicial decisions across the nation that seek to limit the infusion of private money into public elections. Why? Because large amounts of private money privatizes elections and makes elected officeholders more beholden to their big contributors than to the common citizen -- which is not democratic.

We look forward to the speedy lifting of the injunction by US Federal Judge Dan Polster. It is now time for this law, passed overwhelmingly by voters, to be enacted. It is long past time for the City of Akron to defend instead of fighting the will of the people by enacting and enforcing this law. That would be a refreshing change from their behavior during the last 4 years.

Mayor Plusquellic and others are concerned that this law, once enacted, will create unintended consequences and loopholes that will favor Republicans. We agree that the law is far from perfect and falls short of the goal of eliminating private money from public elections. Citizens don't believe our political system is fair and never will be until the political voice of the average citizen becomes louder than the voice of big money corporate interests and equal to the voice of the wealthy.

Fortunately, the Mayor and City Council, all of whom are Democrats, are in a position to do something about this. We call on the Mayor and Council to (1) pass complementary local legislation that will strengthen our new law, and (2) work with local reformers and citizens to press for federal legislation and for changes to federal law that prevents private money, regardless of source, from corrupting democracy.

This is the goal of local reformers. We hope it's also the goal of the Mayor and City Council.

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Yes on Issue 11 Campaign was the main group that advocated for passage of campaign reform legislation in the City of Akron in the fall of 1998. The Campaign was also one of the major defenders of the law in court -- along with several individuals, Gregory D. Coleridge (on behalf of Yes on Issue 11 Campaign), Mike Parsons, Bruce Kilby and Patricia Longville.

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