



March 24, 2009

Dear supporters:

As some of you may have heard, Common Cause had to lay off 19 staff members last week from our national headquarters and from a few of our state organizations due to the difficult economy we all face.

We are grateful to the foundations and individual donors who have committed their support in spite of the economic tsunami. Your generosity, combined with our willingness to make the tough choices have enabled us to retain the key program staff needed to advance the Common Cause agenda in this uniquely opportune moment for change. We are well-positioned to grow as the economy turns around and more individuals and foundations are once again comfortable giving.

Until then, Common Cause remains a staff that is 54 strong. We have nearly 400,000 members and supporters, a presence in 35 states and are as committed as ever to our core issues of campaign finance reform, election reform and watchdog efforts around government ethics, the bailout and the stimulus.

It was difficult to cut our staff because every one of our departing staff members is talented and skilled and brought unique gifts to the organization. Some had faithfully served Common Cause for decades, and we will miss them all. In Florida and New Jersey, we eliminated paid staff and those state organizations will now be led by volunteer boards, similar to 17 volunteer state boards that run some of our other state chapters, such as Nebraska, Maine and Tennessee. On a more positive note, Common Cause during this fiscal year has added staff in two states previously run by volunteers: Hawaii and Michigan, and we are in the process of adding staff in Ohio and Illinois. However, we made the lay offs because we owe it to our supporters to make sure that Common Cause continues to maximize its effectiveness.

Despite our economic challenges Common Cause has achieved extraordinary recent victories and has wonderful opportunities right now. We led efforts to pass a major redistricting proposition in California, we just championed efforts that set campaign donation limits in New Mexico. We hope to win full public financing in Maryland and possibly in Wisconsin. This

week, we celebrate the introduction of bi-partisan “Fair Elections Now Act,” a bill that would create a voluntary system of public funding for congressional campaigns.

As Common Cause approaches its 40th anniversary next year, I want you to know we are working hard to fulfill John Gardner’s mission of restoring the core values of American democracy, reinventing an open, honest and accountable government capable of solving today’s challenges in the public interest, and empowering ordinary people to make their voices heard in a government that belongs to them.

I urge you to go to www.commoncause.org to review our recent victories and initiatives and if you are in a position to help us with a donation this would be a wonderful time to do so.

As always, thank you for your support.

Peace,

Bob

Bob Edgar
President and CEO of Common Cause