



BIG MONEY OUT VA

“DEMOCRACY LOSES WHEN BIG MONEY WINS”

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The Virginia General Assembly gets an “F” on Campaign Finance Reform *Voters lose as the last campaign finance bill dies in committee*

RICHMOND, VA – This week’s demise of Senator Boysko’s Senate bill (SB377) restricting the personal use of campaign funds in a non-recorded vote of the House Appropriations Committee characterizes the smoke-and-mirror techniques used to kill every significant, commonsense campaign finance bill this legislative session. After Virginia had one of the most expensive legislative races in the country last fall, good governance advocacy groups were optimistic that meaningful campaign finance bills would be heard and passed this year. Yet bill after bill died in darkness, either without a hearing or by being referred to committees where they languished without a vote.

Early in the session, the writing was on the wall in the House of Delegates when Delegate Bulova’s bill limiting contributions (HB874) was killed by not allowing it to be heard in committee. The lack on progress on this bill and other campaign finance bills likely reflects the [influence of Dominion Energy](#), a state-regulated monopoly which is the state’s largest donor to House leadership. This influence was clearly evident when two bills, one in the Senate and another in the House, prohibiting campaign funds from public utilities such as Dominion Energy died in committee without any votes being registered.

Senior democratic leadership left HB40, a popular bill patroned by Delegates Simon and Cherry that would restrict the personal use of campaign funds, to languish unheard by the Appropriations Committee. This is despite passing the Privileges and Elections Committee unanimously and a [JLARC study which concluded that the bill had negligible fiscal impact](#).

Only one significant campaign finance bill emerged from the Senate. Senator Boysko’s bill on restricting personal use of campaign funds (SB377) passed with strong bipartisan support (35-4). Meanwhile, Senator Roem’s bill banning contributions from public utilities (SB326) died in Senator Lucas’s Finance Committee without a hearing. Senator Favola’s bill on disclosing dark money advertising (SB78) was killed on the Senate floor by two Democrats, Senators Surovell and Perry.

The demise, without a recorded vote, of the Senate Boysko’s bill in the Appropriations Committee, which took less than two minutes, highlighted the opposition of senior House leadership to any type of good governance reform. Ignoring the strong support that this bill has from voters as well as legislators in the Senate and the House P&E Committee, Delegate Torian, chair of the appropriations committee, provided no explanation as to why house leadership opposed the bill instead stating that he would like the patrons of this bill to bring back a piece of legislation that he and the Speaker would like to see pass as a priority in 2025.

The lack of transparency in hearing these bills is shameful. Let’s be clear, campaign finance bills were defeated by Virginia Democrats. Our legislators must enact the will of the voters. Virginians, irrespective of party support this reform by large margins. Campaign finance reform is proving virtually impossible in Virginia where big donors, including Dominion Energy, pull all the strings while powerful legislators who receive large donations are happy to have their cake and eat it too.

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BigMoneyOutVA is a non-partisan group which champions good governance and transparency in Virginia, while promoting increased public discourse between citizens of the Commonwealth and their legislators. We are dedicated to getting big money out of politics through campaign finance reform so as to increase the legitimacy and integrity of government and to enable our elected officials to better reflect the interests and will of all citizens of the Commonwealth.