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With Illinois in the National Spotlight Regarding our Former Governor in Jail for Political Corruption and our Current Governor Charged with “A Political Corruption Crime Spree” Illinois’ Democracy Has Been Put Up For Sale.

NOW is the Time To Donate To the CAC To Help Us Protect and Reform our Public Institutions, Restore Integrity in the Political Process at the Local and State Level, and Empower Citizens to Take Back Their Democracy.

The Citizen Advocacy Center (CAC) is a non-profit, non-partisan, community based legal organization that works to build democracy in the western suburbs by strengthening the public’s capacities, resources, and institutions for self-governance.

CAC Community lawyers provide free legal services to help average people and students have a greater role in local and state decision-making. For nearly fifteen years our community lawyers have been teaching people how to use civic tools and build the public’s skills and confidence to have a more effective voice in the democratic process. We have had a measurable impact on public policy makers in the communities we serve: discriminatory tax policies, outrageous information fees, and anti-First Amendment practices have been reformed because of the work of our community lawyers.

Every day, the CAC helps citizens play a greater role in public affairs. We answer more than 250 public inquiries a year on topics such as tax increment financing, home rule, the First Amendment, the Freedom of Information Act, the Open Meetings Act, access to the ballot and much more. We help community groups organize winning community campaigns. We hold open forums on current community topics. We advocate for systemic solutions to public concerns and for policies that increase government transparency, accountability, and accessibility. And when necessary, we litigate to dismantle illegal governmental policies or practices that shut citizens out of participating in the democratic process.

Simply put, there is no organization like the CAC – and we have been locally, regionally, and nationally recognized for our outstanding community lawyering services, advocacy training and civic training. Most notably, we have been a driving force behind systemic reforms in our public institutions.

The CAC is funded by private foundations and individual contributions. We do not accept government or corporate money, leaving us free and uncompromised to speak out on government abuse and better able to hold people in power accountable. All contributions to the Center are 100% tax deductible.

We rely on people who believe in the democratic process and in the power of the citizen participation. Together we can build democracy and better the quality of public life in our communities and the State. Now is an opportune time to support our work.

Please donate at <http://www.citizenadvocacycenter.org/donate.html>

To view a sample of CAC achievements, please view the following page.

Ms. Terry Pastika
Executive Director/ Community Lawyer

Building Democracy for the 21st Century

Sample of Citizen Advocacy Center Achievements

- Mentored more than 160 high school, college and law student interns who work under the direction of Center community lawyers on public policy issues, investigating complaints of government corruption and anti-democratic practices, helping citizen groups community organize, and conducting government surveys;
- Analyzed open government and open records statutes in Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Minnesota and Wisconsin for statutory and implementation strengths and weakness. The Center produced ten pieces of model legislation specifically tailored to reform weaknesses in each state's open government and open records laws; ten policy papers that outlined strength and weaknesses in each state and five citizen guides. The Center's project involved the analysis of more than 1,000 cases and legal publications;
- Spoke to more than 3,000 students about civic engagement and civic empowerment;
- Was a lead organizer with the DuPage County Regional Office of Education in two county wide Regional Civic Summits. These were the first regional summits on civic education in the country;
- Created more than 40 hands-on civic lesson plans that are free to educators and posted on the Center's website;
- Participated at more than 460 community and 50 professional conferences on democracy issues;
- Answered more than 2,000 public inquiries on issues such as the Freedom of Information Act, the Open Meetings Act, tax increment financing, home rule, access to the ballot, access to the airwaves, and many other topics;
- Facilitated more than 150 democracy workshops and seminars for the general public, the press, and public officials;
- Won a "Most Innovative Advocacy" Chicagoland regional award;
- Won a "Public Interest Rising Star Award" national award for our civic engagement work;
- Helped more than 300 community groups organize effective community advocacy campaigns;
- Appeared on the cover of the DuPage County Bar Brief and have had three lead articles published;
- Created free databases with more than 45,000 records that detail campaign contributions from DuPage County vendors to public officials in DuPage County and documenting the surge in contributions over \$10,000 to public officials in DuPage County from DuPage County vendors;
- Created the nationally recognized Citizen Training Corps that has been dubbed "Civics Boot Camp with Clout". The program is a hands-on basic civic class where in graduates have become election judges, run for public office, and started community groups;
- Helped to incorporate or obtain tax exemptions for more than a 20 community organizations and have helped to organize more than 40 community groups;
- Hosted three suburban civic fairs that networked 150 community organizations;
- Through litigation, forced DuPage County to disclose County procurement records;
- Through litigation, forced the DuPage County Board to rescind a policy that violated the Open Meetings Act;
- Defended a local community association from a \$110 million SLAPP suit (strategic lawsuit against public participation) brought by a developer because the association petitioned a forest preserve to preserve open space;
- Filed an Amicus Brief with the United States Supreme Court on behalf of a homeowner seeking to protect her property in the landmark eminent domain case of *Kelo v. the City of New London*;
- Forced the removal of government policies or practices that prevent free speech, access to information, and access to the ballot and airwaves at various levels of government;
- Conducted more than ten local government audits to evaluate accessibility, accountability, and transparency of public policies; and
- Worked in coalition with dozens of local, regional, and national organizations to advance democratic reforms in the area of ethics, campaign finance, lobbying, transportation, health, and public access to the media.