

# The 1% vs. Democracy in Minnesota

Following the Money Behind  
The Photo ID Amendment

**TAKE  
ACTION  
MN**

**TakeAction Minnesota**

[takeactionminnesota.org](http://takeactionminnesota.org)

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**TakeAction Minnesota**

[www.takeactionminnesota.org](http://www.takeactionminnesota.org)

705 Raymond Ave. #100  
St. Paul, MN 55114

Phone: 651.641.6199  
Fax: 651.645.1311

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# I. Executive Summary and Significant Findings

This report, “The 1% vs. Democracy in Minnesota” follows the money behind the effort to restrict voting rights in Minnesota through a constitutional photo ID amendment that would make voting—our most fundamental constitutional right—more difficult, and in some cases, impossible for hundreds of thousands of law-abiding eligible voters.

The report finds that executives from Minnesota’s three largest banks—Wells Fargo, U.S. Bank and TCF—led and funded a series of inter-related campaign entities that were instrumental in the Republican takeover of the Legislature that put members of ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council) in the House leadership and placed an attack on the voting rights of Minnesotans at the top of the 2012 legislative agenda.

## Significant Findings:

- Jon Campbell, executive vice president at Wells Fargo, chairs the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, the largest lobby association in the state. Richard Davis, president of U.S. Bank, is president of the Minnesota Business Partnership, the third-largest lobby association. Together, they established Minnesota Forward. Along with the Minnesota Bankers Association and seven other employer groups, the Chamber and the Business Partnership make up the Coalition of Minnesota Businesses.
- These networks of banker-led and funded groups spent:
  - almost \$500,000 to elect 25 new Republican legislators in 2008 and 2010;
  - more than \$375,000 for 21 legislators pushing the voter ID amendments; and
  - \$180,000 on the campaigns of 14 ALEC members.
- These organizations also put almost \$100,000 into the campaigns of House Speaker Kurt Zellers and House Majority Leader Matt Dean. Both Zellers and Dean are ALEC members,<sup>1</sup> and both are sponsors of an ALEC-model bill, HF 1597, that would amend the state’s constitution to require people to show photo identification in order to vote.

Why would banking executives expend considerable time and resources enacting a legislative agenda in which the lead item is to make it harder for law-abiding eligible voters to exercise their right to vote?

**Consider:** Wells Fargo has received \$43.7 billion in bailout funds from taxpayers<sup>2</sup>. In both 2009 and 2010, Wells Fargo made \$12 billion in profits<sup>3</sup>. Despite this, Wells Fargo paid less in federal income taxes from 2008–2010 than the average Minnesota household<sup>4</sup>.

Instead of returning taxpayer money to the economy, saving Minnesotans' homes, or working to protect our schools during the foreclosure crisis, Wells Fargo, TCF and U.S. Bank executives and board members have donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to candidates who will make it harder for members of the 99% of the population to vote. These are the same Minnesotans who have been negatively affected by their irresponsible policies.

Further, while the photo ID constitutional amendment would impede the voting rights of hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans—including active duty service members and other absentee voters—it will disproportionately impact the elderly, students, foreclosure victims, the working poor and minorities, the very citizens who most need to use the democratic process to counter the influence of the superwealthy and the political entities they finance.

## II. VOTER ID = VOTER SUPPRESSION

Minnesota consistently has had one of the highest rates of eligible voter turnout in the country. That may change due to HF 1597, a proposed constitutional amendment requiring eligible voters to present a photo ID with their current addresses. The bill is sponsored by Rep. Mary Kiffmeyer, House Speaker Kurt Zellers, House Majority Leader Matt Dean and more than 30 other Republican House members.

Kiffmeyer and other Republican legislators had introduced a similar bill at the beginning of last year's session, but Governor Mark Dayton vetoed it. Calling Minnesota's election system "the best in the nation," Dayton stated that voter fraud was not a significant problem in Minnesota and the proposed legislation would be a \$23 million "unfunded mandate" on local governments at a time when they were already facing drastic budget cuts. In vetoing the bill, Dayton said it was his duty as governor to ensure that all eligible Minnesota voters are able to exercise their right to vote without barriers standing in the way<sup>5</sup>.

Introducing a constitutional amendment, however, is a way to circumvent the usual legislative process and the Governor's veto power. If passed, Minnesota voters will decide the issue in the 2012 election<sup>6</sup>.

Kiffmeyer and the bill's other sponsors claim this law would prevent people from misrepresenting themselves in order to vote, but this is not an actual problem. As a matter of fact, no one has ever been convicted of voter impersonation in Minnesota. The bill's true aim is to drive down turnout among certain groups of voters.

According to recent testimony by the secretary of state's office, the proposed photo ID amendment could adversely affect more than 700,000 eligible Minnesota voters. This total includes 215,000 registered voters who do not have a Minnesota driver's license or ID card<sup>7</sup> with a current address on it, and another 500,000 eligible voters who use Election Day registration<sup>8</sup>.

As many as one-in-10 eligible Minnesota voters may not have the kind of photo ID the amendment would require. That percentage is even higher for seniors, people of color, people with disabilities, low-income voters and students<sup>9</sup>. Some seniors who have been voting all their lives in the same district, who might not have a current driver's license, would not be able to vote.

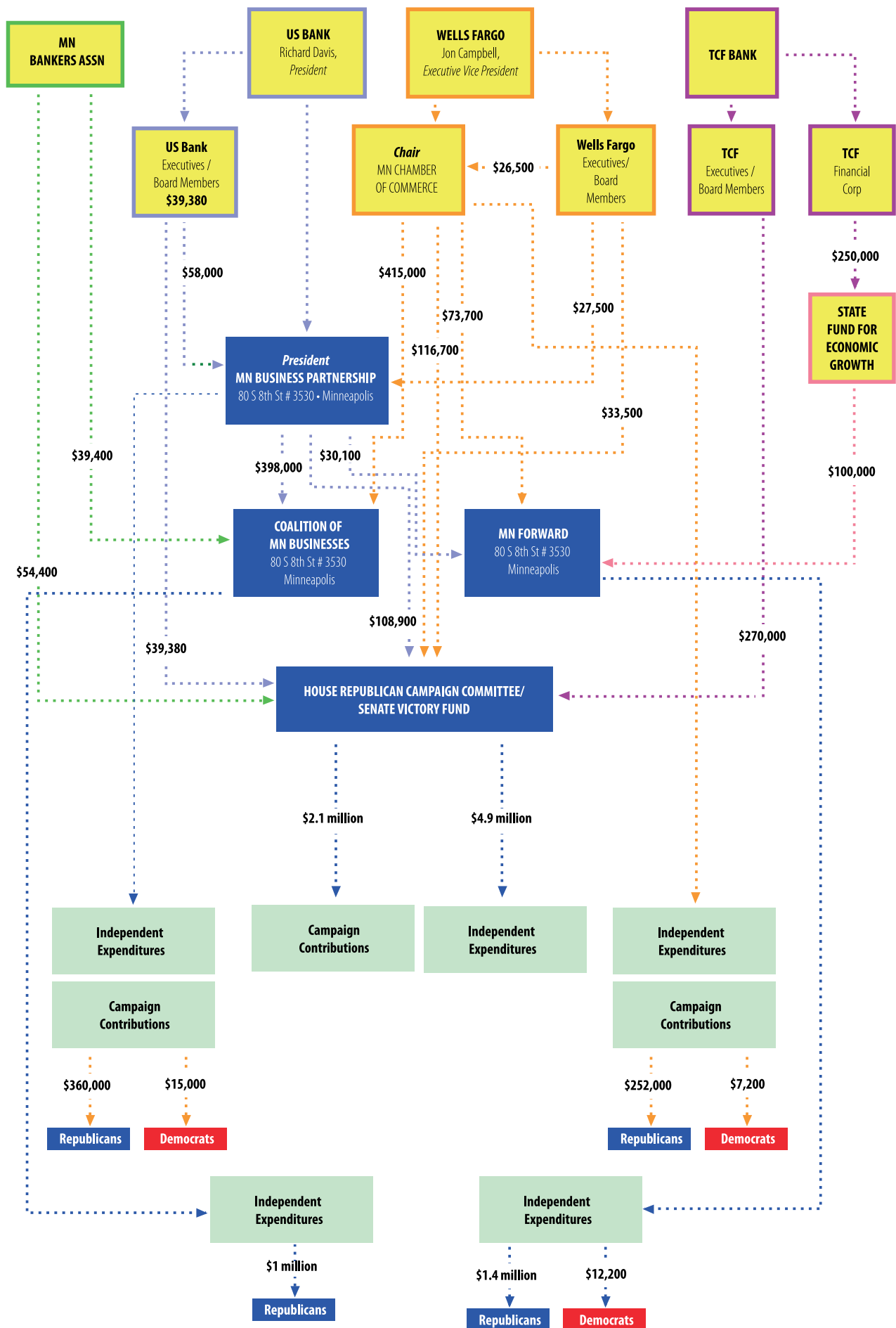
The process of getting the valid identification required under this amendment is not as simple or cost free as the bill's proponents have presented. Acquiring a driver's license or special ID card may involve considerable effort and cost to obtain the required documentation—such as one's birth certificate or for many women, a marriage certificate. It would force already struggling Minnesotans to take time off work, wait in long lines at DMV offices and pay for government IDs, just to be able to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

Comments made by supporters of similar voter identification laws around the country shed light on the true motive behind such policies—the suppression of voters.

- New Hampshire Speaker William O'Brien told a tea party group that he wanted to make it more difficult for students to vote. Kids coming out of school, he said, do “what I did when I was a kid, which is voting as a liberal. That's what kids do; they don't have life experience and they just vote their feelings<sup>10</sup>.”
- The chief sponsor of Georgia's voter ID legislation told the Justice Department the bill would keep more African Americans from voting, which was fine with her since “if there are fewer black voters because of this bill, it will only be because there is less opportunity for fraud<sup>11</sup>.”

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Independent expenditures from the Coalition of Minnesota Businesses and Chamber of Commerce helped elect 12 new Republican legislators in 2010. The Coalition and Chamber spent an average of \$28,300 per campaign, an average of 34% of the total money (independent expenditures and contributions) in each race.

On average, the amount of independent expenditures from the Coalition and Chamber were almost twice as much as the total contributions raised by the candidates themselves.

2010 Campaigns	Total Independent Expenditures	Total Contributions	Total from Independent Expenditures/ Contributions	Total from Bank-led orgs (Chamber, MBP, CMB)	% from Bank-led orgs	Ratio of Bank-led orgs \$ to contributions
Roger Crawford*	\$70,500	\$15,200	\$85,700	\$39,700	46.3%	2.6
Kurt Bills	\$66,500	\$12,700	\$79,200	\$35,400	44.7%	2.8
Dan Fabian	\$79,400	\$16,100	\$95,500	\$39,000	40.8%	2.4
Diane Anderson	\$70,700	\$8,600	\$79,300	\$30,000	37.8%	3.5
Pat Mazorol*	\$75,900	\$30,900	\$106,800	\$40,400	37.8%	1.3
Linda Runbeck	\$67,600	\$17,700	\$85,300	\$30,900	36.2%	1.7
Rich Murray	\$25,200	\$16,700	\$41,900	\$15,200	36.2%	0.9
David Hancock	\$50,000	\$4,000	\$54,000	\$18,900	35.0%	4.8
Mike LeMieur*	\$102,000	\$14,100	\$116,100	\$35,600	30.7%	2.5
Sondra Erickson*	\$97,600	\$14,000	\$111,600	\$31,700	28.5%	2.3
Kelby Woodard*	\$56,500	\$14,600	\$71,100	\$18,300	25.8%	1.3
Andrea Kieffer*	\$83,700	\$21,400	\$105,100	\$22,600	21.5%	1.1
<b>TOTAL for 2010 CAMPAIGNS</b>		\$212,300	\$1,080,900	\$367,600	34.0%	1.7

Independent expenditures from the Coalition of Minnesota Businesses and Chamber of Commerce also made up a significant percentage of the campaign funds for House Speaker Kurt Zellers and House Majority Leader in their 2008 races.

2008 Campaigns	Total Independent Expenditures	Total Contributions	Total from Independent Expenditures/ Contributions	Total from Bank-led orgs (Chamber, MBP, CMB)	% from bank-led orgs	Ratio of Bank-led orgs \$ to contributions
Kurt Zellers*	\$83,800	\$13,900	\$97,700	\$30,000	30.7%	2.2
Matt Dean*	\$86,300	\$24,100	\$110,400	\$46,800	42.4%	1.9

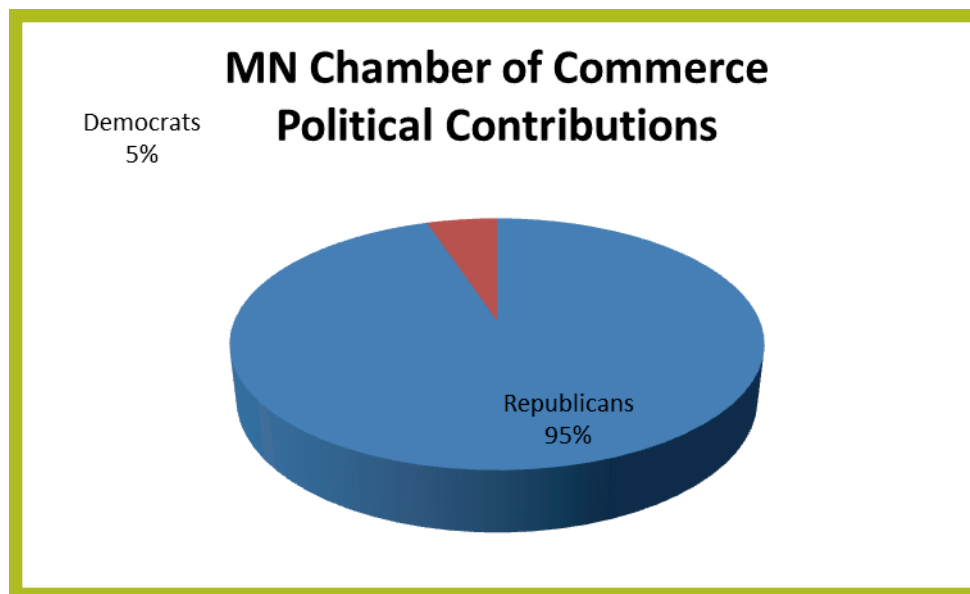
*\*sponsoring photo ID amendment*

### III. The 1% vs. Minnesota Democracy

#### **A** Following the Money: Bank-led and funded political entities

##### 1) Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

- The Chamber is the largest lobby group in Minnesota, spending \$1.8 million on lobbying in 2010<sup>12</sup>.
- Jon Campbell, executive vice president at Wells Fargo, chairs the Minnesota Chamber. Campbell is also head of Wells Fargo's Social Responsibility Group<sup>13</sup>.
- From 2000 to 2010, the Chamber has spent \$233,000 in independent expenditures, all for Republican candidates<sup>14</sup>.
- The Chamber has directly contributed \$134,000 to Republican candidates and committees and \$7,200 to Democrats<sup>15</sup>.



## 2) **Minnesota Business Partnership (“the Partnership”)**

- The Minnesota Business Partnership is the third-largest lobby association in the state, spending \$920,000 on lobbying in 2010<sup>16</sup>.
- Richard Davis, president of U.S. Bank, is president of the Business Partnership<sup>17</sup>.
- The Partnership has made \$296,000 in independent expenditures for Republican candidates since 2000 and \$2,900 for Democrats<sup>18</sup>.
- The Partnership has contributed \$195,000 to Republican candidates and committees in this period and \$17,000 to Democrats<sup>19</sup>.
- Over the last decade, the following contributions have been made to the Business Partnership<sup>20</sup>:
  - o U.S. Bank executives and board members have contributed \$58,000;
  - o Wells Fargo executives and board members gave \$27,500; and
  - o TCF executives and board members gave \$18,500.

## 3) **Coalition of Minnesota Businesses**

- The Coalition of Minnesota Businesses is made up of the Chamber, the Business Partnership, the Minnesota Bankers Association and eight other employer groups<sup>21</sup>.
- The Coalition is in the same suite as the Minnesota Business Partnership. The Coalition’s PAC is at the same address as the Chamber<sup>22</sup>.
- The Coalition spent \$218,000 in independent expenditures in 2008 and \$375,000 in 2010 on state legislative races; all for Republicans<sup>23</sup>.
- The Coalition received:
  - o \$145,000 from the Minnesota Business Partnership in 2010 and \$75,000 in 2008<sup>24</sup>.
  - o \$150,000 from the Minnesota Chamber in 2010 and \$100,000 in 2008<sup>25</sup>.

#### 4) Minnesota Forward

- Minnesota Forward is a joint venture between the Chamber and the Partnership<sup>26</sup>.
- Minnesota Forward is located in the same office suite as the Minnesota Business Partnership and the Coalition of Minnesota Businesses<sup>27</sup>.
- Minnesota Forward spent \$1 million in independent expenditures against Dayton for governor in 2010 and \$344,000 for Emmer<sup>28</sup>.
- In 2010, Minnesota Forward received contributions of<sup>29</sup>:
  - o \$30,100 from the Minnesota Business Partnership;
  - o \$73,700 from the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce; and
  - o \$100,000 from TCF, through the State Fund for Economic Growth.

## **B** Current House Leadership— Banking on Bankers from the Beginning

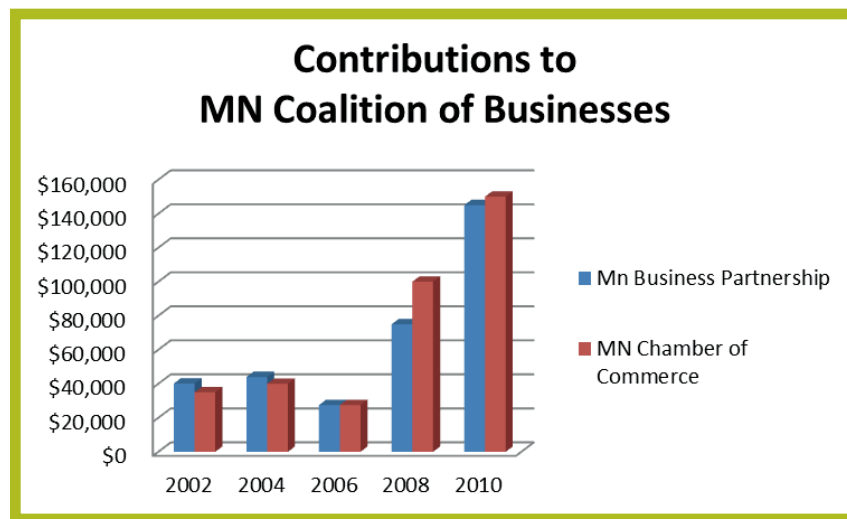
- House Speaker Kurt Zellers and House Majority Leader Matt Dean are both ALEC members<sup>30</sup> and are both sponsors of the ALEC-model photo ID constitutional amendment.
- The banking establishment has been supporting Zellers and Dean since their first campaigns in 2003 and 2004<sup>31</sup>.
- Zellers was first elected in a 2003 special election and re-elected in 2004, with financial support from the Coalition of Minnesota Businesses, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce and the Minnesota Bankers Association.
- After Matt Dean lost a 2003 special election, the Coalition of Minnesota Businesses stepped in and spent \$11,000 in independent expenditures to get Dean elected in the 2004 rematch.

## C Setting the Stage in 2008

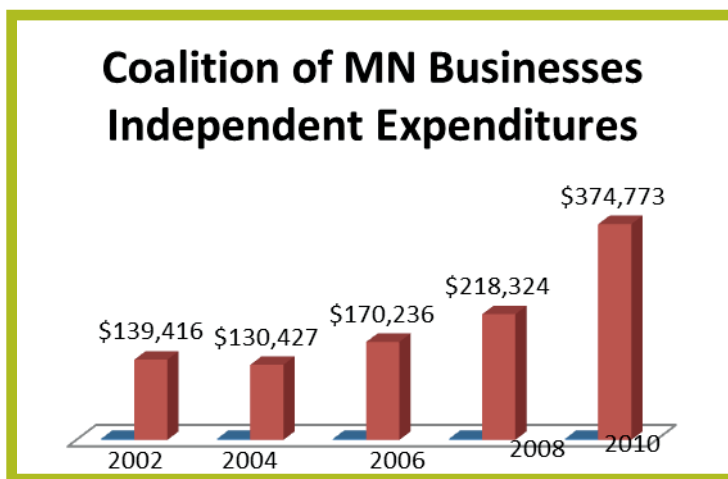
- The bankers made sure Dean and Zellers, who was then Assistant Minority Leader, were re-elected in 2008<sup>32</sup>.
  - The Chamber spent almost \$30,000 in independent expenditures for Zellers.
  - The Minnesota Business Partnership spent almost \$38,000 in independent expenditures for Dean and the Coalition of Minnesota Businesses spent another \$8,600.
- The banker-led groups also provided significant financial backing to four Republican legislators who joined the House in 2008, including Matt Dean's former legislative aide Tara Mack, for whom the Minnesota Business Partnership spent more than \$43,000 to help win a seat from a Democrat<sup>33</sup>.
- The Minnesota Business Partnership and Chamber of Commerce both greatly increased their contributions to the Coalition of Minnesota Businesses in 2008<sup>34</sup>.
  - The Business Partnership increased its contribution almost 300 percent from \$27,500 in 2006 to \$75,000 in 2008.
  - The Chamber gave almost 400 percent more, stepping up from \$27,500 in 2006 to \$100,000 in 2008.

## D Financing the Republican Takeover of 2010

- The Minnesota Business Partnership and Chamber of Commerce increased their contributions to the Coalition of Minnesota Businesses even more in 2010<sup>35</sup>.
  - o The Business Partnership nearly doubled its contribution from \$75,000 in 2008 to \$145,000 in 2010.
  - o The Chamber increased its contribution by 50 percent, giving \$150,000 in 2010, up from \$100,000 in 2008.



- In turn, the Coalition of Minnesota Businesses stepped up its campaign spending with \$375,000 in independent expenditures for 14 Republican candidates. The average investment of \$27,000 per campaign resulted in electing 11 new Republican House members and one new Republican Senator, and re-electing a Republican House member<sup>36</sup>.

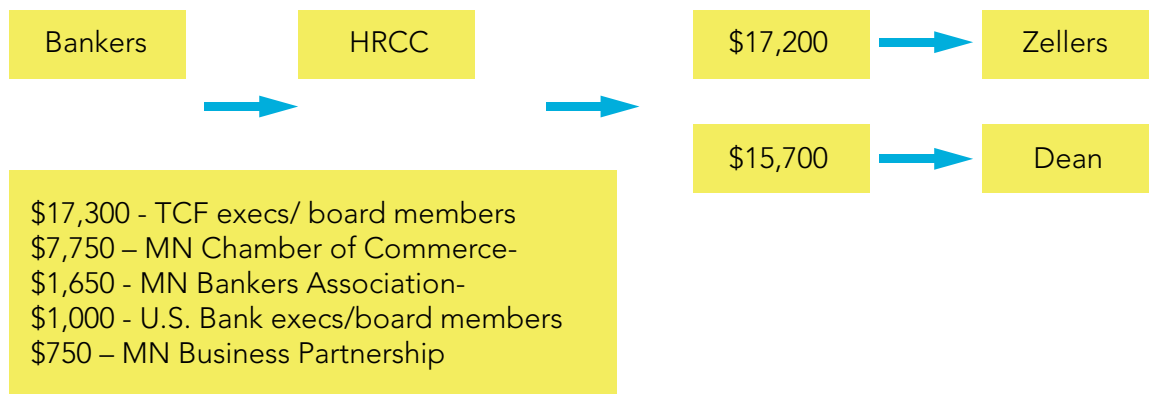


- The Chamber made \$35,400 in independent expenditures to defeat the DFL candidate in another House race that resulted in a new Republican taking office<sup>37</sup>.
- Minnesota Forward spent \$15,800 to help elect a new Republican House member and a new Republican senator<sup>38</sup>.
- The Minnesota Business Partnership contributed to help eight additional new Republican senators get elected<sup>39</sup>.

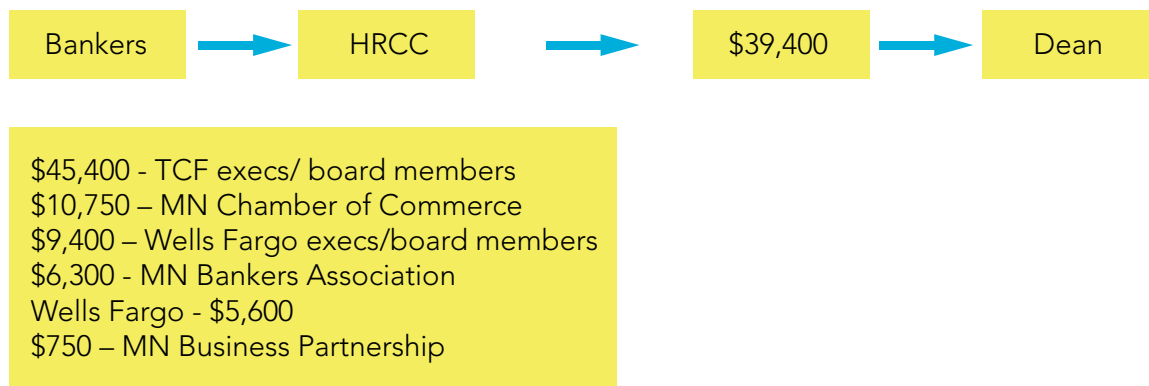
## E THE HOUSE REPUBLICAN CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE (HRCC) and THE SENATE VICTORY FUND

- Bankers have been some of the largest contributors to the House Republican Campaign Committee (HRCC) that has backed Zeller and Dean since their first campaigns.

### 2003



### 2004





- Over the last decade, HRCC and the Senate Victory Fund have received contributions totaling:
  - o \$270,000 from TCF executives and board members;
  - o \$116,650 from the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce;
  - o \$108,850 from the Minnesota Business Partnership;
  - o \$54,400 from the Minnesota Bankers Association;
  - o \$39,380 from U.S. Bank executives and board members; and
  - o \$33,500 from Wells Fargo executives and board members.
- The independent expenditures from HRCC and the Senate Victory Fund, together with those from the banker-led groups described above, succeeded in electing a new majority of Republican legislators ready to carry out the bankers' political agenda.

# F The Price of the Constitution

LEGISLATORS WHO ARE SPONSORING VOTER ID AMENDMENTS			
Legislator	Independent Expenditures/ Contributions from Banker-Led Networks		HRCC/ SVF Independent Expenditures
	Total	Individual Sources	
House Speaker Kurt Zellers	\$36,400	\$30,400-Chamber, \$3,400-Forward, \$1,200-MN Bank, \$900-CMB, \$500-MBP	\$58,400
House Majority Leader Matt Dean	\$50,600	\$38,800-MBP, \$19,500-CMB, \$300-MN Bank	\$86,700
Rep. Pat Mazorol*	\$40,650	\$34,900-CMB, \$5,500-MBP, \$250-MN Bank	\$29,500
Rep. Roger Crawford*	\$39,700	\$39,700-CMB	\$22,700
Rep. Dan Fabian*	\$39,000	\$39,000-CMB	\$34,500
Rep. Mike LeMieur*	\$35,600	\$35,600-CMB	\$55,600
Rep. Sondra Erickson*	\$33,000	\$31,700-CMB, \$1,300-MBP	\$42,400
Rep. Andrea Kieffer*	\$22,600	\$22,600-CMB	\$34,200
Rep. Tony Cornish	\$18,400	\$17,700-CMB, \$500-MBP, \$200-MN Bank	\$31,500
Rep. Kelby Woodard*	\$18,300	\$18,300-CMB	\$32,800
Rep. Keith Downey*	\$12,900	\$7,400-CMB, \$5,500-MBP	\$34,000
Sen. William Ingebrigtsen	\$11,600	\$11,600-Chamber	\$48,400
Rep. Doug Wardlow*	\$7,300	\$7,300-MN Forward	\$29,500
Rep. Greg Davids*	\$4,800	\$4,000-MBP, \$800-MN Bank	\$49,000
Sen. Paul Gazelka*	\$1,000	\$500-MBP, \$500-MN Bank	
Sen. Scott Newman*	\$700	\$500-MBP, \$200-Chamber	
Sen. Roger Chamberlain*	\$500	\$500-MBP	\$15,200
Rep. Bruce Anderson	\$500	\$500-MBP	\$1,000
Rep. Glenn Greunhagen*	\$500	\$500-MBP	
Sen. Michelle Benson*	\$250	\$250-MBP	
Rep. Bob Dettmer	\$250	\$250-MBP	\$2,000

\* indicates first elected in 2008 or 2010

Independent expenditures include expenditures made for the candidate and against the opponent.

CMB = Coalition of Minnesota Businesses

Forward = Minnesota Forward

MBP = Minnesota Business Partnership

HRCC = House Republican Campaign Committee

Chamber = Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

SVF = Senate Victory Fund

## IV. About ALEC and ALEC Members in Minnesota

The effort to restrict Minnesota's voting rights is not occurring in a vacuum. Making it harder for people to vote has long been a priority for ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council), a secretive collaboration between conservative state legislators and multinational corporations such as Wal-Mart, Coca-Cola and Koch Industries<sup>40</sup>.

ALEC is the vehicle for the country's largest corporations to directly influence state legislation. Through ALEC's various task forces, these corporations develop "model" bills designed to benefit these same corporations. The model bills include areas such as privatizing education, breaking unions, deregulating major industries and passing photo ID laws.

Legislators who are members of ALEC take these model bills back to their states and try to get them passed, without disclosing they are model bills written by ALEC member corporations.

Mary Kiffmeyer is the Minnesota chair of ALEC; a job to which she was appointed by national ALEC leadership<sup>41</sup>.

In 2009, ALEC developed a model for photo ID legislation. After the 2010 elections put Republicans in charge of both chambers of the Legislature in Minnesota and a number of states, ALEC members such as Kiffmeyer began moving ALEC model bills<sup>42</sup>. ALEC members succeeded in passing restrictive photo ID laws in five states last year, including Wisconsin<sup>43</sup>.

In 2011, a number of policies promoted by ALEC were signed into law by Republican governors such as John Kasich in Ohio and Scott Walker in Wisconsin, who have both been ALEC members<sup>44</sup>.

Fifteen GOP legislators who are sponsoring the photo ID amendment are also ALEC members .

MINNESOTA ALEC MEMBERS SPONSORING PHOTO ID AMENDMENT
Rep. Bruce Anderson
Rep. Mike Benson
Sen. Roger Chamberlain
Sen. Theodore Daley
Rep. Matthew Dean
Rep. Connie Doepke
Rep. Steve Drazkowski
Rep. Sondra Erickson
Rep. Pat Garofalo
Sen. Gretchen Hoffman
Rep. Mary Kiffmeyer
Sen. Warren Limmer
Rep. Pam Myrha
Rep. Ron Shimanski
Rep. Kurt Zellers



## V. CONCLUSION

Minnesota's democracy is under threat from politicians and their corporate sponsors, whose aim is to keep wealth and power concentrated within the 1% and make public institutions less accountable to the voters. While Minnesotans face foreclosure, crumbling infrastructure and unemployment, the very people who should represent us—state legislators and senators—want to reduce our ability to stand up for ourselves by participating in the democratic process.

Legislators who pursue an agenda that makes it harder for seniors, people of color, people with disabilities and students to vote, are declaring they do not stand with us—instead they stand for corporate greed. The tax loopholes and legislative favoritism enjoyed by corporations such as Wells Fargo, U.S. Bank and TCF have created record income inequality and fostered an atmosphere of irresponsibility and entitlement.

# About TakeAction Minnesota

TakeAction Minnesota is an organization of 14,000 dues-paying Minnesotans and 27 member organizations united behind a vision of social, racial, and economic justice. We are committed to building and protecting active grassroots democracy where people are able to make positive change. We organize people to act effectively, train and develop new grassroots leadership, build dynamic coalitions, and educate the public.

The focus of our work is a healthcare system that prioritizes health, reduces racial disparities, and is democratically accountable; broadening economic opportunity by addressing our state and federal revenue crisis and reducing income inequality; increasing employment and closing the employment gap between white people and people of color, including reducing the barriers to employment for those exiting the criminal justice system, and; expanding and protecting grassroots democracy, including stopping efforts such as the photo ID amendment that seek to restrict access to the vote.

Learn more about how to protect the constitutional rights of Minnesota voters through our campaign

Our Voices Count Minnesota [www.ourvoicescountmn.org](http://www.ourvoicescountmn.org) or at [www.takeactionminnesota.org](http://www.takeactionminnesota.org)

## Endnotes

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- 6 "Constitutional amendment for voter ID introduced," Minnesota Public Radio, April 27, 2011, Tom Scheck
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- 16 Minnesota Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board
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- 19 Minnesota Business Partnership "About the Partnership", <http://www.mnbp.com/leadership.cfm>
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31 Minnesota Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board  
32 *Minnesota Independent* August 5, 2011  
33 Minnesota Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board  
34 Minnesota Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board  
35 1) The four Republican legislators were Greg Davids, Keith Tim Kelly and Tara Mack.  
36 Minnesota Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board  
37 Minnesota Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board  
38 Diane Anderson, Roger Crawford, Keith Downey, Sondra Erickson, Dan Fabian, David Hancock andrea Kieffer, Mike LeMieur, Pat Mazorol, Carla Nelson, John Pederson, Linda Runbeck and Kelby Woodard.  
39 Kurt Bills  
40 Doug Wardlow and Doug Magnus  
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