



# John Bonifaz

## Democrat for Secretary of State

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## **Bonifaz Issues Statement on Supreme Court Ruling on Campaign Spending Limits**

**BOSTON** – Voting rights leader John Bonifaz, Democratic candidate for Massachusetts Secretary of State, today issued this statement regarding the Supreme Court’s ruling on a Vermont campaign spending limits law:

“A bare majority of the United States Supreme Court today has sanctioned again our nation’s system of unlimited campaign spending. The Court is as wrong today as it was 30 years ago when it first ruled on this matter in *Buckley v. Valeo*, striking down congressional campaign spending limits passed in the wake of the Watergate scandal.

“In its controlling opinion, the Court refuses to reconsider its *Buckley* ruling in the face of new facts and circumstances that demonstrate that unlimited campaign spending drowns out the voices of ordinary citizens and threatens the integrity of our electoral process. This opinion is short-sighted and does not reflect the reality in our elections today. Like the Court’s early rulings upholding the poll tax – only to be later overturned, this ruling today is inconsistent with basic democratic principles and with the constitutional promise of political equality for all.

“With a record campaign spending limit set for the Governor’s race by Chris Gabrieli, and equally absurd limits set for the Lieutenant Governor’s race by Deb Goldberg and the Secretary of State’s race by Bill Galvin, Massachusetts is yet another example of auction-block politics that threatens public confidence in our democracy. With pro-active leadership and grassroots pressure, we can overhaul our campaign finance system and return voters to power.

“As Massachusetts Secretary of State, I will press for state legislation that creates a system of full public funding of our elections coupled with voluntary campaign spending limits. I will also build and lead a coalition of secretaries of state calling for a constitutional amendment to make clear that mandatory campaign spending limits are entirely consistent with the First Amendment.

“In his dissenting opinion, Justice John Paul Stevens stated that ‘the time has come to overrule’ the Court’s decision in *Buckley*. As Justice Stevens wrote: ‘Just as a driver need not use a Hummer to reach her destination, so a candidate need not flood the airways with ceaseless sound-bites of trivial information in order to provide voters with reasons to support her.’

“History will prove Justice Stevens right.”

John Bonifaz, the founder of the National Voting Rights Institute, is a principal architect of the legal movement for revisiting the Court’s 30-year-old ruling that sanctioned the nation’s system of unlimited campaign spending. He served as co-counsel on behalf of a coalition of Vermont voters and organizations in defense of the Vermont law and helped marshal a series of friend-of-the-court briefs in support of the Vermont law, including one from a coalition of secretaries of state.

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