

Campaign to Restore Democracy: From the Local to the National

Participate in local, grassroots democracy, and take it to Washington! Across America, people want "Government Of, By, and For the People". But, despite the excitement of the presidential race, our federal government remains largely dysfunctional and corrupt, and controlled by the few, the rich, and the corporations. **Representative government and the two party system are both failing.** Witness Iraq, Katrina, economic injustice, lack of healthcare, erosion of civil liberties, etc. We the people have been disempowered, our voices ignored. **It is time to restore and advance democracy from the ground up. Join us.**

Campaign Mission

The Local Mission: Local organizations and individuals in Marin are uniting to revive democracy at all levels of government by working with our closest representatives, our city and town councils. Inspired by local democracy efforts around the country, *we are urging city and town councils to establish a policy that affirms their responsibility to represent their citizens at higher levels of government by passing resolutions on crucial national and state issues.*

The National Mission: We want Marin's cities and towns to join forces with cities and towns nationwide in order to influence national policies on crucial issues. **We are working with national organizations** to help build a critical mass of thousands of cities that can restore the right of citizens to be represented by local government at higher levels, particularly where Congress and the President fail to represent us.

Strategy in Marin

- 1. Network, collaborate and build coalitions** with everyone who wants greater representation, including unions, and social justice and environmental groups.
- 2. Take action "Inside/Outside"**- work personally and directly with individual council members, as well as attending and speaking at councils' public meetings, and doing public forums and town hall meetings.
- 3. Proceed "Town by Town"**- begin with the most accessible and amenable councils, and progress to the more difficult, learning as we go, step by step. *In some towns, we may need to address council's existing policies, either informal or formal, which prohibit resolutions on national issues unless they directly affect the council's ability to govern or provide services.* We want councils to represent citizens on crucial national issues, regardless of whether their governance and services are directly or indirectly affected, simply because these issues are of serious concern to their constituents.

The Key Legal Precedent for restoring citizens' right to be represented by local government

The California Supreme Court in the 1967 case of Farley v. Healey held:

"As representatives of local communities, boards of supervisors and city councils have traditionally made declarations of policy on matters of concern to the community whether or not they had power to effectuate such declarations by binding legislation. Indeed, one of the purposes of local government is to represent its citizens before the Congress, the Legislature, and administrative agencies in matters over which the local government has no power. Even in matters of foreign policy it is not uncommon for local legislative bodies to make their positions known."

Examples of cities addressing national issues

- The U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities, representing 18,000 cities, deal largely with national issues because they recognize that national issues do affect councils' ability to govern and deliver services.
- In 1986, 100 cities and 14 states led the divestment campaigns that ended apartheid in South Africa.
- The Anti-Patriot Act campaign- 8 states and 414 cities and counties have formally opposed the Patriot Act and/or upheld the Constitution via resolutions.
- Cities for Peace- Over 300 municipalities passed resolutions or referendums favoring withdrawal from Iraq.

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This campaign is initiated by **Marin Peace and Justice Coalition**

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Your participation in this campaign and your feedback and comments on this document will be greatly appreciated!