



Fred Wertheimer

Fred Wertheimer is the Founder and President of Democracy 21, a nonpartisan, nonprofit (c)(4) organization that works to strengthen our democracy.

Democracy 21 and its affiliated nonpartisan, nonprofit (c)(3) organization, Democracy 21 Education Fund, works to ensure the integrity of our elections and government decisions, to hold public officials accountable for abuses of office, and to empower citizens in the political process.

Wertheimer has been a national leader for five decades on democracy issues, including campaign finance reform and government integrity, accountability, and transparency issues.

He led the successful lobbying effort to enact the landmark presidential public financing system in 1974. He has played a leading role in every campaign finance reform battle in Congress since then including the current fight for H.R. 1/S. 1, the For the People Act. Wertheimer has participated as a lawyer in a number of major Supreme Court campaign finance cases, including *Buckley v. Valeo*, *McConnell v. FEC*, and *Citizens United v. FEC*.

Wertheimer played a lead role in the lobbying campaigns for the two most important campaign finance reform bills enacted in the modern era: The Federal Election Campaign Act Amendments of 1974 and the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (BCRA), also known as the McCain-Feingold law. He also played a lead role in the lobbying campaign to enact the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007. Speaker Nancy Pelosi said about Wertheimer's role that he provided "exceptional leadership to hold government and Congress to the highest ethical standard."

The late Senator John McCain (R-AZ) said that Wertheimer provided for the BCRA fight the "corporate memory" and a "constant source of advice and counsel not only on the technical aspects but also as to what's doable." Senator Feingold (D-WI) described his role on BCRA as a "tour de force" performance. The lead House sponsors of BRCA, Reps. Christopher Shays (R-CT) and Marty Meehan (D-MA) said about Wertheimer's role, "There might never have been a [BCRA] law to defend if not for your tireless efforts and unswerving commitment over the years. Your contribution to this struggle has truly been spectacular."

National Public Radio called Wertheimer one of the "leading strategists on ethics and campaign finance laws since the 1980s." He has been described over the years by the *The New York Times* as "the country's leading proponent of campaign finance reform," by *Washington Post* columnist E. J. Dionne as "the eminence grise of the campaign reform movement," and by *Time* magazine as "a godfather of the campaign finance reform movement."

Prior to founding Democracy 21, Wertheimer served as President of Common Cause, a national grassroots citizens' lobby from 1981 to 1995.

Wertheimer has been a Fellow at Harvard University's Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy (1996) and a J. Skelly Wright Fellow and Visiting Lecturer at Yale Law School (1997). He is a graduate of the University of Michigan and Harvard Law School.