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**COMMITTEE OF SEVENTY OPPOSES BILL TO DOUBLE
ALREADY-DOUBLED CAMPAIGN FINANCE LIMITS
Condemns Newest Effort to Change Rules
in the Middle of the Mayoral Campaign**

PHILADELPHIA – February 8, 2007 – The Committee of Seventy strongly denounced a new proposed ordinance introduced by Councilman Jim Kenney that would alter existing limitations on campaign contributions to mayoral candidates.

The new bill would change but not completely eradicate the limits, as in Councilman Kenney’s earlier bill. The Committee of Seventy believes that changing the limits in any way at this point would invite a return to pay-to-play. The organization also opposed the earlier bill.

Seventy again sent letters to the declared mayoral candidates asking them to abide by the current contribution limits without regard to the fate of the latest Kenney bill, which was introduced today.

“The new ordinance makes a total mockery of campaign finance reform,” said Zachary Stalberg, Seventy’s President and CEO. “It is staggering to believe that Council would even consider changing the rules of the game in the middle of the mayoral primary. Will there be a new campaign finance law introduced next week, and the week after that? At what point does Council say ‘enough is enough’?”

According to Stalberg, “Councilman Kenney’s new idea to redouble the already-doubled campaign

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finance limits is as damaging as eliminating those limits altogether.” Bill Number 070044, which will be considered along with today’s bill at a February 14th hearing before Council’s Committee on Law and Government, would remove all restrictions on campaign donations if any candidate spends \$2 million of his or her own money. The alternative bill would allow the same \$2 million self-funding threshold to trigger an increase in permissible contributions from individuals and organizations to \$10,000 and \$40,000 respectively, and would further permit those limits to double again each time a candidate personally donates an additional \$2 million. If the bill prevails, it would be the second time that Council has raised contribution limits for mayoral candidates based upon the spending of self-funders.

Stalberg called Kenney’s latest bill a “misguided response” to the outcry over changing the campaign finance system by two mayoral candidates, the media, Seventy, the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, the Philadelphia Bar Association and many others. “Passage of either campaign finance bill would unleash a new era of Philadelphia’s pay-to-play culture that has perverted our government and tarnished the city’s reputation,” he said. He urged Council members, all of whom face reelection this year, to consider their own public image.

In his letter to the candidates, Stalberg again reminded them of their commitment – made in response to the Committee of Seventy’s Ethics Agenda – to convene an independent panel after the election to examine all current laws on campaign contributions and national best practices. “It makes a lot of sense to conduct a thorough and dispassionate review of the optimal way to regulate campaign finance away from the heat of an ongoing election,” he reiterated. “I hope the candidates stay true to their word.”

Stalberg stated that the Committee of Seventy will testify at the February 14th hearing to urge defeat of both proposed ordinances or, in the alternative, a tabling of the campaign finance issue until after the November general election.

The Committee of Seventy is a non-partisan organization conducting a permanent campaign to improve the Philadelphia region by demanding ethical conduct of public officials, safeguarding elections, promoting government efficiency and educating citizens.

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