



## Change Congress and Regulatory Transparency: CHANGE v2: What changes Obama will need?

QUT Faculty of Law Free Public Lecture Series 2009 presents

### Professor Lawrence Lessig Professor of Law at Stanford Law School

Chaired by Justice James Douglas of the Supreme Court of Queensland

Friday 29 May 2009

The Banco Court, Law Courts Complex, 304 George Street, Brisbane

5.30pm Refreshments

6.00pm Lecture commences

7.00pm Lecture concludes

#### The Speaker

Lawrence Lessig is a Professor of Law at Stanford Law School and founder of the School's Center for Internet and Society. Prior to joining the Stanford faculty, he was the Berkman Professor of Law at Harvard Law School, and a Professor at the University of Chicago. He clerked for Judge Richard Posner on the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals and Justice Antonin Scalia on the United States Supreme Court. Professor Lessig's career has focused on law and technology, especially as it affects copyright. He represented web site operator Eric Eldred in the ground-breaking case *Eldred v. Ashcroft*, a challenge to the 1998 Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act. His current academic work addresses a kind of "corruption." He has won numerous awards, including the Free Software Foundation's Freedom Award, and was named one of *Scientific American's* Top 50 Visionaries, for arguing "against interpretations of copyright that could stifle innovation and discourse online". Professor Lessig teaches and writes in the areas of constitutional law, contracts, and the law of cyberspace.

#### The Topic

In this Public Lecture Professor Lessig will talk about the project he (and others) launched in 2008 called "Change Congress" <http://change-congress.org/>. Its purpose is to persuade members of congress to rely for funding on citizen contributions rather than big donations from special interests. The organisation considers that funding by corporate special interests has caused members of congress to favour these interests, undermining the integrity of the legislative process and resulting in legislation that may harm the public interest. Change Congress has encouraged congress members to accept a new method of raising campaign funds where individual donations are capped at \$100 and public funding for campaigns will match private donations once they reach a viability threshold. Change Congress v1 proposed a multi-tiered program to achieve reform. It planned to enlist the support of house representatives, encourage citizen contribution pledges, garner support for sympathetic politicians, and track the relationship between representatives and lobbyists. v2, announced on 9 January 2009, has simplified this program by encouraging private donors to pledge to withhold donations from congress members who won't opt-in to the Change Congress system. v2 aims to abolish the culture of big private donations and free legislators from the grip of special interests.

The aims of Change Congress are consistent with Barack Obama's goal to achieve a transparent political culture that restores public trust. Its success may be critical to Obama's hopes for enlisting congressional support for ambitious reforms to solve domestic and political crisis.

#### Registration

Register by 22 May 2009 at [qutlawpubliclectures@qut.edu.au](mailto:qutlawpubliclectures@qut.edu.au)

Registered attendees may claim 1 CPD point for the Queensland Bar Association and Queensland Law Society.

Professor Lessig's visit is co-sponsored by the ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Innovation and QUT Vice Chancellor Prof. Peter Coaldrake

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