

SUPPORT FAIR AND CLEAN ELECTIONS

Public Financing Succeeds in Maine and Arizona!

- Sixty-seven percent of candidates for statewide office in Arizona, including the governor, attorney general, treasurer and the entire Corporations Commission participated in the Clean Elections program in 2006.
- In the 2006 general election, 59% of Arizona's legislative candidates were publicly financed.
- In Maine, 81% of challengers and 82% of incumbents chose public financing during the 2006 election cycle.
- In Maine, 86% of the state Senate and 79% of the state House candidates chose public financing in 2006.
- Overall, 82% of eligible candidates in Maine and 60% of eligible candidates in Arizona ran as publicly financed candidates in 2006.

The WV Public Campaign Financing Act would create an alternative public financing option for candidates seeking election to the state Senate and House of Delegates. The system is voluntary and candidates who participate agree to abide by contribution and spending limits. Public funds would be made available to candidates for the state Senate and House of Delegate candidates in single-member districts beginning with the elections to be held in 2010, and to candidates in the remaining districts beginning in 2012.

How does it work?

Candidates who voluntarily select the Fair and Clean Election option must:

- ✓ Collect a set number of \$5 qualifying contributions from registered voters in their districts. The number of qualifying contributions a candidate must collect depends on the office and district in which the candidate is running. Qualifying contributions must be checks or money orders and will be audited.
- ✓ Agree to raise no private money for their campaign and to spend none of their own.

Qualified candidates:

- ✓ Receive a set amount of public funding upon certification. The amount of funding a candidate receives depends on the office and district in which the candidate is running. (Contributions from 1996-2002 were examined to help set amounts).
- ✓ Receive limited one-to-one matching funds (i.e. maximum amount of additional funding is 2 times original funding) when outspent by a non-participating candidates or independent expenditures.

Table 1. Required qualifying contributions required and amount of funding available for candidates for House of Delegates.

| # of Delegates elected | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| # of Qualifying contributions | 100 | 125 | 150 | 175 | 200 | 225 | 250 |
| Initial funding available* | \$7,500 | \$10,000 | \$12,500 | \$15,000 | \$17,500 | \$20,000 | \$22,500 |
| Maximum funding available** | \$22,500 | \$30,000 | \$37,500 | \$45,000 | \$52,500 | \$60,000 | \$67,500 |

*A candidate would receive this amount in a contested primary or general election. In an uncontested primary election a candidate may receive only 25% of the amount available for the office (in a contested election). In an uncontested general election, a candidate may receive only 10% of the amount for that office in a contested race.

**A candidate may also receive limited one-to-one matching funds when outspent by a non-participating candidate (up to 2 times the original funding).

Table 2. Number of qualifying contributions required and amount of funding available for candidates for state Senate.

| | # of Qualifying Contributions Required | Initial Funding Available | Maximum Funding Available |
|------------------------------|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Senate (Districts 8 & 17) | 400 | \$35,000 | \$105,000 |
| Senate (all other Districts) | 250 | \$20,000 | \$60,000 |

Non-participating candidates may raise private contributions from individuals and PACs based on the current campaign finance laws of West Virginia and spend an unlimited amount of their own money.

Public Funding of Campaigns ---Where does the money come from?

- ✓ Qualifying contributions collected by candidates
- ✓ Designated amounts from the state’s Abandoned Property Trust Fund
- ✓ 10% surcharge on civil and criminal penalties over \$1,000
- ✓ Revenue generated from a tax check-off program (West Virginia taxpayers may designate \$3 of their taxes to the Public Campaign Financing Fund, without increasing their tax bill)
- ✓ Unspent Seed Money Contributions (“Seed money” is a contribution of no more than \$100 made by an individual to be used only prior to or during the qualifying period.)
- ✓ Unspent public financing funds (For example, any funds left over after unsuccessful primary would be returned.)
- ✓ Voluntary donations
- ✓ Penalties levied by the Election Commission for violations of the Public Campaign Financing Act
- ✓ Interest generated by the Public Campaign Financing Fund
- ✓ Other sources designated by the legislature

Maine has designated \$2 million in funding from general revenue. Arizona’s Clean Elections Act is funded primarily from a 10% surcharge on all civil and criminal penalties, and returned \$1,364,578 in surplus to the state’s general fund in 2006. Connecticut’s program is funded through the state’s unclaimed assets.

For more information: Carol Warren, Citizens for Clean Elections (304-847-5121), cwarren1@citlink.net or Julie Archer, WV Citizen Action Group (304-346-5891), julie@wvcag.org or visit our website www.wvoter-owned.org.

