



# **INVESTING IN DEMOCRACY**

## **CREATING PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS IN YOUR COMMUNITY**



**Center for Governmental Studies**

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**Creating Public Financing  
of Elections in Your Community**

Center for Governmental Studies

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# FOREWORD

Public financing of electoral campaigns is perhaps the most important political reform to emerge in the past 30 years. Public financing provides candidates for public office with money and other resources to conduct their campaigns. Public financing makes candidates less dependent on large or special interest contributions, provides them with neutral sources of funding, gives them more time to discuss their issues with voters, increases opportunities for people of color, women and new candidates to enter politics and encourages candidates to limit their spending.

This booklet is designed to help public officials, candidates, grassroots organizations and interested individuals create or improve existing public financing systems in their own state and local elections. It describes the history of public financing, advantages and shortcomings of existing systems, funding mechanisms, legal issues and strategies for implementing reforms. An Appendix lists national, regional and state campaign finance reform support organizations.

The Center for Governmental Studies (CGS), a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, has spent twenty years helping elected officials and citizens groups adopt public financing laws and other campaign finance reforms in state and local jurisdictions. CGS has published a series of reports on "Public Financing in American Elections," including detailed analyses of public financing systems in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Suffolk County (NY) and New York City. CGS reports on Tucson and Long Beach are in preparation. Project Director Paul Ryan authored this booklet, with editing support from CEO Tracy Westen and President Bob Stern. Saidah Johnson prepared the Appendix of campaign finance reform organizations.

This booklet is part of a larger campaign finance reform toolkit, also called "*Investing in Democracy*," which contains this booklet, two videos entitled "The Road to Clean Elections" and "Running:

The Campaign for New York City Council,” tips on how best to use this toolkit and other materials. The toolkit is available from Public Campaign, 1320 19th St., NW, Suite M-1, Washington, DC (tel: 202-293-0222; fax: 202-293-0202; [www.publiccampaign.org](http://www.publiccampaign.org)).

*"Investing in Democracy"* is a joint project of Carnegie Corporation of New York, Center for Governmental Studies, Firelight Media and Public Campaign, with assistance from the Money & Politics Implementation Project, Northeast Action, Arizona Clean Elections Institute Inc. and Maine Citizen Leadership Fund. Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Solidago Foundation have provided funding for this project, although they are not responsible for the findings or conclusions contained in the booklet or other materials.

# INTRODUCTION: PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

“Public campaign financing” is the term used to describe programs that provide public money or other support to qualified candidates to run campaigns for public office. Public campaign financing enables candidates to wage competitive campaigns even though they lack personal wealth or access to wealthy campaign contributors. Public financing reduces candidate reliance on special interest money and, consequently, may soften the public’s perception that government officials trade political favors for campaign contributions. Public financing is also used as an incentive for candidates to agree to campaign spending limits, which the United States Supreme Court has ruled must be voluntary in order to be constitutional.

.....

**“The need for collecting large campaign funds would vanish if Congress provided an appropriation for the proper legitimate expenses of each of the national parties, an appropriation amount enough to meet the necessity for thorough organization and machinery, which requires a large expenditure of money.”**

— President Theodore Roosevelt

.....

"The need for collecting large campaign funds would vanish if Congress provided an appropriation for the proper and legitimate expenses of each of the great national parties, an appropriation ample enough to meet the necessity for thorough organization and machinery, which requires a large expenditure of money."

— President Theodore Roosevelt<sup>1</sup>

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The idea of public financing dates back to the early twentieth century, when Progressive Era reformers sought to curb the undue political influence wielded by multimillionaires created during the nineteenth century's industrial revolution. Efforts to enact public financing programs were unsuccessful, however, until the early 1970s. The federal Revenue Act of 1971 established the Presidential Election Campaign Fund to provide public financing to presidential election candidates. In 1974, Maryland, Minnesota and New Jersey became the first states to offer public financing to candidates.<sup>2</sup> Seattle, Washington became the first local government to enact a public financing program in 1978.



Public financing programs are currently administered in federal presidential elections, 27 states and 12 local jurisdictions. Nearly 30 years of publicly-financed elections throughout the United States provide elected officials, grassroots organizations and activists with a wealth of knowledge to draw upon when developing their own public financing programs. *Investing in Democracy* explores the strengths and weaknesses of existing public financing programs, empowering reformers to avoid mistakes of the past and create effective public financing of candidate campaigns in their own communities.

# TYPES OF PUBLIC FINANCING

Public financing takes a variety of forms. Depending on the system, a qualified candidate may receive all or only part of the resources needed to wage a competitive campaign. This section describes five general types of public financing. The section entitled Jurisdictions With Programs in Place lists the types of public financing programs adopted by specific jurisdictions throughout the United States.

## Full Public Financing (“Clean Money, Clean Elections”)

Full public financing (*a.k.a.* “Clean Money, Clean Elections”) systems provide qualified candidates with all of the funding necessary to run a campaign. Candidates begin by collecting a specified number of small (*e.g.*, \$5) “qualifying” contributions. This process is intended to ensure that candidates receiving public funds have a broad base of public support. Once a candidate meets the fundraising qualification threshold, the candidate must cease all fundraising activity. A qualified candidate then receives a grant of public funds in an amount equal to the spending limit. The candidate may not accept private contributions and may not use his or her own money to finance his or her campaign.

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**“[Public financing is] the difference between being able to go out and spend your time talking with voters, meeting with groups, . . . traveling to communities that have been under-represented in the past, as opposed to being on the phone selling tickets to a \$250 a plate fundraiser . . . ”**

Arizona Governor  
Janet Napolitano (D)<sup>3</sup>

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## Partial Public Financing (“Matching Funds”)

The most common type of public financing program provides qualified candidates with some, but not all, of the money necessary to wage a competitive campaign. This type of program is called a

Most often, public funds are distributed to match private contributions raised by a candidate. Such systems are referred to as

**"Overall people are excited about [public financing] because they feel that their particular legislator will not be tied to special interest dollars and that means a lot to them."**

.....

tion (e.g., only contributions up to \$250 are matched), the source of matchable contributions (e.g., only contributions from people who live in the jurisdiction are matched) and the total amount of public funds a candidate may receive (e.g., candidates may only receive up to 50% of the spending limit in public funds).

Some partial public financing jurisdictions distribute public funds to a qualified candidate as a lump-sum grant in an amount established by law. The grant is most often distributed to candidates before an election, but some jurisdictions distribute the public funds after an election. Finally, some partial public financing programs use a combination of matching funds and lump-sum grants.

## Public Financing to Political Parties

The earliest state public financing programs were enacted in 1973, providing public funds directly to qualified political parties. Parties typically qualify to receive public funds by obtaining a specified percentage of the popular vote in the most recent election. In most jurisdictions, only the Democratic and Republican parties qualify for public funding. The public funds distributed

through such programs are typically used to defray the costs of political party conventions.

### **Refunds, Tax Credits, Deductions, Check-offs, Add-ons**

The State of Minnesota refunds up to \$50 to individuals who contribute to political parties or to state office candidates agreeing to spending limits. Though the program is administered by the state department of revenue, the program is not tied to state income tax returns.

Four states offer income taxpayers deductions or tax credits for contributions made to candidates for public office.<sup>5</sup> Limits on maximum tax credit or deduction amounts range from \$25 to \$100. These systems reduce the taxpayer's tax bill.

Many states allow taxpayers to check a box on their tax returns to designate a specified amount of their taxes for distribution to a specific political party or to a special fund, which is then distributed to political parties. Such "check-off" systems do not affect the taxpayer's refund. Some states allow taxpayers to add a specified amount onto their income tax payment for distribution to a specific political party or to a public financing fund. These "add-on" systems reduce the taxpayer's refund.

### **Free Media Resources**

Many jurisdictions around the country provide candidates with non-cash resources, such as free candidate statements in voter information guides or free media time on public television. Such non-cash resources are typically characterized as voter information services, rather than public campaign financing, and are often not linked to spending limits or other campaign finance restrictions. Nevertheless, free non-cash resources provided by a government to candidates are a form of public campaign financing.<sup>6</sup>

# WHY PUBLIC FINANCING: MONEY AS THE MOTHERS MILK OF POLITICS

Successful campaigns for public office depend on a candidate's ability to communicate his or her message to voters.

Communicating with thousands or millions of voters costs money. Understandably, candidates attempt to raise as much money as possible from whomever will contribute. Candidate dependence on large private campaign contributions, however, undermines democracy in a number of ways.

The United States Supreme Court has repeatedly stated that large campaign contributions to candidates pose a threat of corruption or, at the very least, may create an appearance of corruption. Elected officials might be perceived as willing to grant favorable treatment to generous campaign contributors.

Furthermore, the candidate who spends the most money usually wins an election. This statistical reality reflects the unfair advantage enjoyed by candidates who are wealthy or whose political platform appeals to wealthy campaign contributors. Such a system results in the over-representation of the political interests of a wealthy minority, which often conflict with the interests of the lower-income majority.

The political over-representation of the wealthy is inextricably linked to the under-representation of women and people of color. Women and people of color typically earn less income performing the same work as white men, limiting their ability to amass sufficient wealth to run political campaigns or to make large campaign contributions to influence electoral outcomes.<sup>7</sup> As candidates, women and people of color often have limited access to wealthy campaign contributors.

Candidate dependence on large private campaign contributions is a growing concern in judicial elections. More than half of the states select judges by election.<sup>8</sup> Judicial campaign spending has

skyrocketed in recent years. In 2000, state supreme court candidates raised \$45.6 million—a 61% increase over 1998 fundraising and double the amount raised in 1994. Judicial campaign donations are dominated by lawyers and business interests.<sup>9</sup> Reliance by judges on large private campaign contributions threatens the independence of the judicial system.

.....  
"I don't owe anyone after the race. . . . I don't owe them any favors and I think that's instrumental."  
.....

This section describes precisely how public campaign financing programs have reduced the undemocratic influences of private wealth in the political process.

— Arizona State Representative  
Robert Meza (D)<sup>10</sup>  
.....

Public financing programs, however, are unable to remedy every problem related to money in politics. The shortcomings of public financing programs are also discussed below.

### Successes

The amount of public funds distributed to candidates varies from program to program. The positive impacts of public financing can be seen more clearly in some jurisdictions than in others. Programs that distribute funds only to political parties have had little noticeable impact. Great success has been achieved, however, in jurisdictions with generous public financing programs.

#### *Public financing increases the number and diversity of candidates for public office.*

Public financing helps more people run for public office. Candidates lacking personal wealth or access to wealthy campaign contributors—many women and people of color—have run for office and won under public financing programs throughout the United States.

After receiving more than \$55,000 in public funding and winning his first race for public office, for example, Los Angeles City Councilman Ed Reyes stated, "My parents are from Mexico. I'm

the first generation that has grown up here, I'm born here. I don't have the traditional ties to the power groups or the power structure. I literally came from the neighborhood. . . . With public financing I knew I had a shot."<sup>11</sup>

In New York City's 2001 elections, public financing plus term limits produced a record number of candidates for public office. In

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**"It was refreshing not to have to raise money, or in some cases spend my own. . . . I feel a certain independence from certain special interest groups. It was nice to be able to say, "Thanks for the thought, but I'm running clean.""**

— Three-term Maine State Senator  
Peter Mills (R)<sup>13</sup>

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2001, 355 candidates appeared on the city ballot, up from a former high of 239 candidates in 1991.<sup>12</sup> In Arizona's 2002 elections, the number of Native American and Latino candidates running for office nearly tripled from the 2000 elections. In 2000, 13 such candidates ran in the primaries (10 were publicly-financed), while 37 Native American and Latino candidates ran in 2002 (21 were publicly-financed).

Public financing allows a greater number and diversity of candidates to run for public office. It enhances voter choice and produces more democratic institutions of government that reflect the broad diversity of our nation's population.

***Public financing encourages candidate interaction with low- and moderate-income communities.***

Public financing programs relieve fundraising pressures on candidates, providing incentives for candidates to interact with all voters regardless of their wealth. Partial public financing programs also encourage candidates to interact with small contributors by limiting the size of contributions that are matched with public funds.

New York City, for example, matches each dollar contributed by a city resident up to \$250 with \$4 in public funds. Contributions

from corporations and PACs are not matched. The fact that small individual contributions are matched at the rate of \$4-to-\$1, combined with the fact that only individual residents can vote, gives candidates a strong incentive to campaign to all New York City residents, regardless of their wealth.

Under full public financing programs, candidates need only raise a specified number of small (e.g., \$5) contributions to qualify for full campaign funding. Nearly everyone can afford to make a \$5 contribution, allowing candidates to campaign for voters' votes instead of campaigning for wealthy contributors' contributions.

In this way, public financing programs reduce the importance of large campaign contributions, increasing the importance of small contributions and votes. Low-income communities receive more representation under political systems in which their votes and small contributions mean as much to candidates as contributions from wealthy donors.

***Public financing increases competition by leveling the fundraising playing field.***

Under systems of privately-financed elections, incumbent officeholders build campaign fund war chests that effectively discourage competition. Most campaign contributors view their contributions to incumbents as sure bet investments, ensuring immediate and future access to elected decision-makers. A campaign contribution to a challenger is a gamble, risking no return at all if the challenger loses to the incumbent. Public financing reduces the fundraising advantage enjoyed by incumbent officeholders, increasing competition in the process.

In Arizona, for example, challengers in 1998 spent only 37¢ for every dollar spent by an incumbent, before public financing was available. Under Arizona's new Clean Elections system, challenger spending in 2000 jumped to 76¢ for every dollar spent by an incumbent. Likewise in Maine, challengers in 1998 spent only 54¢ for every dollar spent by an incumbent, before public financing was available. Under the Clean Elections system, challenger



spending in 2000 jumped to 78¢ for every dollar spent by an incumbent.<sup>14</sup>

***Public financing reduces the time candidates and officeholders spend fundraising.***

Fundraising is the single most important and time consuming campaign activity in privately-financed elections. Candidates for local, state and federal office often spend as much as 90% of their campaign time making phone calls and attending fundraising events. This emphasis on fundraising comes at the expense of voter contacts and substantive campaigning.

Fundraising does not stop when a candidate wins an election and takes office. Most elected officials intend to win reelection to the same office or run for higher office. Elected officials often capitalize on their status as public decision-makers by raising funds for future campaigns from lobbyists and special interests conducting business with the government. Such activities raise the spectre of corruption or, at the very least, concern that an elected official is spending significant time fundraising instead of tending to official public duties.

By reducing fundraising pressures (or eliminating them, in the case of “Clean Elections” systems), public campaign financing reduces the amount of time candidates and officeholders spend fundraising. Under partial public financing systems, the spending limit becomes a candidate’s fundraising goal. Provided spending limits are appropriately set, a candidate’s fundraising goal will be met early enough in the campaign season to allow the candidate to shift his or her attention to discussing substantive issues with voters or performing the duties he or she was elected to perform.

***Public financing reduces or eliminates the need for private fundraising, decreasing real or apparent conflicts of interest for elected officials.***

Public financing programs require participating candidates to abide by spending limits. The combination of spending limits and public campaign funds allows candidates to be more selective in accepting contributions—or, in the case of full public funding, to



related to private money in politics. This section explores the shortcomings of public financing programs.

*Participation in public financing programs is voluntary and spending by nonparticipating candidates is not limited.*

Participation in public financing programs throughout the United States is completely voluntary. Nonparticipating candidates are not required to abide by spending limits or other restrictions imposed on publicly-financed candidates.

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**“For me, it’s been fantastic. For people who are working and can’t do the fundraising, I think it’s really opened up who could run. . . . I’m a single mom. I work for a nonprofit. Certainly, I wouldn’t have time to fundraise.”**

— Kelly Ann Staples (D), 2000  
Candidate for the Maine State House of Representatives<sup>16</sup>

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Candidate participation exceeds 90% in several public financing jurisdictions, but some candidates still refuse to participate in the programs. Nonparticipating candidates typically fall into one of four categories: (1) those with great personal wealth intending to spend it on their campaign, (2) those with access to enough wealthy donors to raise funds and spend in

excess of the voluntary spending limit, (3) those running symbolic campaigns who intend to raise or spend little money and (4) those who are ideologically opposed to public financing.

Candidates in the first two categories may upset the level playing field. But public financing programs can be designed to include “trigger” provisions that maintain competitiveness despite the presence of nonparticipating candidates in a race. Under an ideal trigger provision, a nonparticipating candidate who exceeds the spending limit “triggers” the elimination or raising of spending limits and the provision of additional public funds to publicly-financed candidates in the same race, to help keep them on a level playing field.

*Legislative bodies sometimes do not adequately fund the programs.*

The single most important ingredient in a successful public campaign financing program is adequate funding. Opponents of public financing typically attack with claims that public financing will bankrupt the jurisdiction. Though the cost of a public financing program may produce sticker shock among those without experience dealing with large budgets, even the most generous public financing programs cost just a fraction of the jurisdiction's total budget.

In the words of New York City's former mayor Rudy Giuliani, "The amount of money [distributed through the city's public financing program] is, in the budget of New York City . . . infinitesimal. You can't find it. It's a percentage of a percentage of a percentage of a percentage."<sup>17</sup> Los Angeles spent only 0.049% of its budget on its public financing program from 1992 through 2001,<sup>18</sup> while it spent approximately four times this amount maintaining its zoo.<sup>19</sup> Public financing programs likely save taxpayer money by eliminating sweetheart deals and pork-barreling enjoyed by large campaign contributors.

Federal, state and local governments use a variety of funding sources to administer public financing programs. These mechanisms are fully explored in the section titled Funding the Program. Many programs rely on budget appropriations from the jurisdiction's legislative body. The more funding discretion given to a legislative body or executive official, the higher the likelihood a program will be under-funded.

In Massachusetts, for example, the state legislature refused a state supreme court order to fund the state's full public financing program for its 2002 elections. In response to the legislature's obstinacy, the court allowed state property to be auctioned off and the proceeds distributed to qualified candidates.

The conflict of interest involved when officeholders are asked to appropriate money to fund challengers' campaigns requires that alternative funding mechanisms be considered. The various options available to campaign finance reformers are detailed below.

### *Independent expenditures and issue ads cannot be limited.*

An “independent expenditure” is an expenditure by a person or organization directly advocating the election or defeat of a candidate, which is in no way coordinated with the candidate’s campaign.<sup>20</sup> An “issue ad” mentions a candidate’s name, but does not include words expressly advocating the candidate’s election or defeat. Instead, an issue ad will say, “Candidate X wants to raise your taxes. Call candidate X and tell him you want no new taxes.” The U.S. Supreme Court has interpreted the First Amendment to protect a person’s right to make unlimited independent expenditures.

These non-candidate expenditures can threaten the integrity of public financing programs, with spenders seeking political influence beyond that which is possible under a system of candidate contribution and spending limits. While a person, for example, may only be allowed to contribute \$500 directly to a candidate under a jurisdiction’s contribution limits, the same person may legally make \$1 million or more in independent expenditures on media advertising supporting the same candidate. Though candidates have no control over an independent spender’s message, candidates know who is spending money and typically appreciate such efforts.

Well-designed public financing programs include provisions to mitigate the potentially harmful impacts of independent expenditures. Candidates who agree to spending limits in exchange for public financing should be allowed to spend more than the limits and given additional public funds when large independent expenditures benefit such candidates’ opponents.

Regulation of issue ads in the context of publicly financed elections has not been attempted. The federal Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (*a.k.a.* the McCain-Feingold law), passed in 2002, does contain a provision regulating issue ads related to federal elections. The constitutionality of this provision has been challenged in court but has not yet been decided.

*Public financing laws usually have to be enacted by the initiative process and not all jurisdictions have an initiative process.*

Elected officials often view a proposed public financing program as a threat to their incumbency status, because public financing enables qualified challengers to wage competitive campaigns. Consequently, few strong public financing programs have been enacted by state legislatures or city councils. Instead, most of the nation’s public financing laws were passed as ballot initiatives. A ballot initiative campaign, however, can be a costly endeavor. Furthermore, the federal government and many states, particularly those in the East, do not have ballot initiative processes.

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**“I really played [the Clean Elections system] as a campaign issue. I wanted to be able to say, ‘I’m not accountable to anyone but you the voter.’ Obviously it worked well—I got elected.”**

This roadblock may be opening up somewhat. In recent years, three state legislatures have adopted “Clean Elections” systems for non-legislative state offices. In 1998, Vermont’s legislature voted for full public financing for the governor and lieutenant governor’s offices. In 2002, North Carolina’s legislature voted for full public financing of judicial elections. In early 2003, New Mexico’s legislature adopted full public financing for the state’s powerful Public Regulatory Commission. Also, Connecticut’s legislature approved a “Clean Elections” system for its gubernatorial elections in 1999, although that bill was vetoed by the governor.

— Maine State Senator Ed Youngblood (R). Youngblood defeated a 16-year incumbent Democrat.<sup>21</sup>

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# CONDITIONS IMPOSED ON CANDIDATES VOLUNTARILY PARTICIPATING IN PUBLIC FINANCING PROGRAMS

Most public financing programs share the same general features: contribution limits, spending limits, qualification thresholds, high spending opponent trigger provisions, limits on a candidate's use of personal funds and debate requirements. Wide variations exist, however, in specific program details, such as the dollar

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**"Matching funds reduced my need to appeal to a particular special interest community. It's a little easier to get \$250 from a person as an individual . . . . But the contribution is matched [with public funds], so it's worth as much as a \$500 contribution from a corporate PAC without the special interest strings."**

— Los Angeles City Councilwoman  
Jan Perry<sup>23</sup>

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candidates for all elected city offices—city council, controller, city attorney and mayor—may participate in the public financing program.

States vary widely in the offices covered by public financing programs. Arizona, Maine, Massachusetts, Hawaii, Minnesota and Wisconsin offer public financing to candidates for all state offices. New Mexico offers full public financing to candidates for the state's Public Regulation Commission but not to candidates for any other office. Vermont offers full public financing to candidates for

amounts of limits, qualification thresholds and the manner in which public funds are distributed to candidates. This section describes the major elements of public financing programs.<sup>22</sup>

## Offices Covered

Most local government public financing programs apply to all or nearly all of the jurisdiction's elected officials.

In the City of Los Angeles, for example,

governor and lieutenant governor. Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan and New Jersey offer partial public financing to candidates for governor. North Carolina is the only state to offer public campaign financing to candidates for appellate and supreme court judicial elections.<sup>24</sup>

## **Spending Limits**

Although it is possible to create a system of public financing without linking it to spending limits, all jurisdictions with public financing systems for candidates also have spending limits. Spending limits apply only to candidates who voluntarily participate in the public financing program. Spending limits vary dramatically from one jurisdiction to another, with the size of the jurisdiction being the most significant factor. At the local government level, limits range from a low of \$10,000 per election for a council candidate in the Town of Cary, NC, to \$5.7 million per election for a New York City mayoral candidate.

Under Arizona's full public financing law, spending limits for "Clean Elections" candidates in 2002 ranged from a combined primary and general election limit of \$26,970 for legislative office to a combined primary and general election limit of \$1.02 million for the office of governor. Massachusetts spending limits for "Clean Elections" candidates in 2002 ranged from a combined primary and general election limit of \$30,000 for the office of state representative to a combined primary and general election limit of \$3 million for the office of governor.

Under North Carolina's judicial public financing program, a publicly financed candidate running for the state supreme court may not spend more than \$270,300 in the primary and general election, combined. A candidate for the court of appeals may not spend more than \$203,500.

## **Limits on Use of Personal Wealth**

The U.S. Supreme Court has interpreted the Constitution to protect a candidate's right to spend as much personal wealth as he or she chooses. Voluntary public financing programs, on the other



hand, typically limit the amount of personal wealth a candidate may spend.

In the City of Los Angeles, for example, city council candidates participating in the partial public financing program may not spend more than \$25,000 in personal wealth on their campaign, while publicly financed candidates for citywide office may not spend more than \$100,000 in personal wealth.

Limits on candidate use of personal funds are typically much lower in full public financing systems. In Arizona, for example, “Clean Elections” candidates for legislative offices are limited to \$500 in expenditures of personal money, while “Clean Elections” candidates for statewide office are limited to \$1,000 in expenditures of personal money.

### **Contribution Limits**

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that reasonable contribution limits are a constitutional means of avoiding political corruption or the appearance of corruption. Most jurisdictions’ contribution limits apply to candidates whether or not they choose to participate voluntarily in the jurisdiction’s public financing program. In some jurisdictions, however, candidates who participate in the public financing program are subject to different contribution limits than those who do not.

Contribution limits in local jurisdictions with public financing programs range from a low of \$100 per election to certain candidates and political committees in Austin, Boulder and Oakland, to \$4,950 per election cycle to program candidates running for citywide office in New York City. Most local jurisdictions’ contributions limits are between \$250 and \$1,000, with different limits applying to candidates for different offices. Candidates for citywide office are typically able to accept larger contributions than candidates for city council.

State contribution limits vary widely. Contributions from individuals to candidates running for governor in New Jersey, for example, were limited to \$2,200 per election in 2002, regardless of whether



Los Angeles city council candidates, for example, must raise at least 100 contributions of \$250 or less totaling at least \$25,000 to be eligible for public funding. Los Angeles mayoral candidates must raise at least 300 contributions of \$500 or less totaling at least \$150,000 to be eligible for public funding.

Under Maine’s “Clean Elections” program, a candidate seeking public funding must collect the following numbers of \$5 qualifying contributions: 2,500 for the office of governor, 150 for state senate and 50 for the state house of representatives.

In order to qualify for public funds under Minnesota’s matching funds program, a candidate for governor must raise at least \$35,000 in contributions of \$50 or less, while a candidate for the state house of representatives must raise \$1,500 in contributions of \$50 or less.

**Total Public Funds Available**

Total public funding available to candidates, as a percentage of the spending limit, ranges from 15% in the City of Oakland to full

public financing in  
Arizona and Maine. In  
New York City, for exam-  
ple, a 2001 mayoral candi-  
date could receive a maxi-  
mum of \$3.4 million (67%  
of the spending limit) in  
public funds per election,  
while a city council candi-  
date could receive a maxi-  
mum of \$91,333 (67% of  
the spending limit) in public funds per election. A 2001 candidate  
for the Boulder City Council, by contrast, could receive up to  
\$5,871 (50% of the spending limit) in public financing.

“[C]andidates from communities of color  
should not be constrained from seeking  
higher office because of not having access  
to the financial resources required.”

— New York City Manhattan Borough  
President C. Virginia Fields<sup>26</sup>

North Carolina’s judicial public financing program provides supreme court candidates who meet all program requirements with \$201,300 in the general election. Qualified general election

candidates for the court of appeals receive \$137,500 in public funds.<sup>27</sup> Public funding received by “Clean Elections” candidates in Arizona’s 2002 elections ranged from \$26,970 for legislative candidates to \$1.8 million for successful gubernatorial candidate Janet Napolitano.

Public funds received by candidates participating in Minnesota’s partial public financing program, by comparison, ranged from \$2,608 for the House of Representatives to \$216,463 for governor. New Jersey candidates for governor may receive up to \$1,350,000 in public matching funds for a primary election and \$3,300,000 for a general election.

### **Participation in Debates**

Several jurisdictions, including Arizona and the cities of Austin, Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco, require some or all candidates participating in the public financing program to participate in public debates. New York City, for example, requires publicly financed candidates for citywide office to participate in two public debates prior to the primary election and at least one debate prior to the general election. Los Angeles candidates must agree to participate in at least one debate prior to the primary election and two debates prior to the general election.

# JURISDICTIONS WITH PROGRAMS IN PLACE

## Presidential Public Financing

The federal Revenue Act of 1971 created a system allowing taxpayers to check a box on their income tax forms authorizing the federal government to use one of their tax dollars to finance presidential general election campaigns. Congress amended the Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA) in 1974, in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal, to extend public financing to presidential primary elections. The federal system offers presidential candidates

partial public financing for primary elections and full public financing for general elections. The first publicly funded presidential election was held in 1976.

“[W]hen I look around the city, the availability of matching funds made it possible for lots of different kinds of people to run—not necessarily win—but run.”

Democratic and Republican party candidates are automatically eligible to participate in the public financing program. Minor party candidates, however, must receive at least 5%

— Steven Banks, 2001 New York City Council Candidate<sup>28</sup>

of the popular vote in a presidential general election before becoming eligible for public financing in future elections. Minor party candidates have found this qualification requirement extremely difficult to reach.

## State Public Financing

Twenty-seven states have adopted some form of public campaign financing. Six states have adopted full public financing programs for some or all state offices. Ten states have adopted partial public financing programs for some or all state offices. Nine states offer public financing to qualified political parties, which they use mainly to defray party convention costs. Five states offer refunds, tax credits or tax deductions for political contributions.

States with public financing programs can be categorized as follows (some states appear in more than one category):

***Full Public Financing (a.k.a. "Clean Money, Clean Elections") Systems***

- Arizona (all state offices)
- Maine (all state offices)
- Massachusetts (all state offices)
- New Mexico (Public Regulatory Commission)
- North Carolina (appellate and supreme court judicial general elections)
- Vermont (governor and lieutenant governor)

***Partial Public Financing Systems***

- Alabama (political party committees)
- Florida (statewide offices)
- Hawaii (all state offices)
- Idaho (political party committees)
- Indiana (political party committees)
- Iowa (political party committees)
- Kentucky (governor)
- Maryland (governor)
- Michigan (governor)
- Minnesota (all state offices)
- Nebraska (state legislative offices)
- New Jersey (governor)
- New Mexico (political party committees)
- North Carolina (political party committees)
- Ohio (political party committees)
- Rhode Island (statewide offices)
- Texas (political party committees)
- Utah (political party committees)
- Virginia (political party committees)
- Wisconsin (all state offices and political parties)

***Refunds, Tax Credits or Tax Deductions for Political Contributions***

- Arkansas
- Minnesota

- Montana
- Oregon
- Virginia

## **Local Government Public Financing**

Twelve local government jurisdictions (*i.e.*, cities or counties) currently offer partial public campaign financing to candidates who agree to spending limits and other campaign finance restrictions.<sup>29</sup> Tucson is home to the oldest local government public financing program currently in operation. Public financing has exploded in popularity in recent years, with seven of the twelve currently active programs adopted since 1998. Public financing is available to candidates in the following local jurisdictions:

- Austin, TX
- Boulder, CO
- Cary, NC
- Long Beach, CA
- Los Angeles, CA
- Miami-Dade County, FL
- New York, NY
- Oakland, CA
- Petaluma, CA
- San Francisco, CA
- Suffolk County, NY
- Tucson, AZ

## FUNDING THE PROGRAM

The element most critical to the success of a public financing program is its funding mechanism. Candidates will not voluntarily agree to spending limits and other campaign finance restrictions if the public financing component is under-funded. Program funding involves two important issues: the security of funding and the source of funding.

### **Security of Funding**

The security of program funding is determined, to a large extent, by the amount of funding discretion given to elected officials. In short, the more discretion given to elected officials, the less secure the funding. Many elected officials view public financing as a threat, because publicly-financed challengers are more likely to mount competitive campaigns. This conflict of interest leads many elected officials to under-fund public financing programs when given the opportunity. For this reason, programs that rely on annual budget appropriations are always at risk of being under-funded. Indeed, any time a program funding mechanism can be changed by legislative action, program funding is at risk.

By contrast, the most secure funding mechanisms are those made part of a local government's charter or a state government's constitution, requiring voter approval to change the funding mechanism. One example is the funding mechanism of the City of Los Angeles. When approving the public financing program, voters amended the city charter to require a \$2 million (plus cost of living adjustment) per year appropriation from the city's general fund into a public financing trust fund. The city council has no discretion over program funding. The \$2 million per year allocation can not be reduced without a voter-approved charter amendment. One drawback to the Los Angeles law is the difficulty of increasing the annual allocation—voter approval is necessary.

New York City's campaign finance law takes a unique approach to program funding, combining the flexibility of the budgetary



process with the security of a charter provision. The city's Campaign Finance Board requests its estimated budget from the mayor and city council. The city charter, however, gives the Campaign Finance Board authority to draw program funding

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**"[F]our states—Arizona, Maine, Massachusetts and Vermont—are experimenting with offering qualified candidates for office the option of public financing: In exchange for refusing to pander to contributions from donors who may want political favors, they get a reasonable taxpayer stipend for their campaigns. . . . The simple truth is that campaigning is expensive, and candidates will get the money someplace. Far better that the public, not special interests, put up the bucks."**

—USA Today Editorial<sup>30</sup>

oo

Fund. This funding mechanism has been reliable so far but, unlike the charter provisions in Los Angeles and New York City, Maine's law can be repealed by the legislature.

The Arizona Citizen's Clean Elections Act, also adopted by voter initiative, is primarily funded by a 10% surcharge on all civil and criminal fines and penalties collected by state courts.<sup>31</sup> While this innovative funding mechanism has generated sufficient funds, reformers exploring similar mechanisms may wish to consider the degree to which a surcharge on criminal fines may place a disproportionate financial burden on low-income communities and people of color.<sup>32</sup>

directly from the city's general fund if the mayor and council fail to appropriate sufficient program funding. This general fund "draw down" provision has never been utilized because the city's public financing program has been fully funded in every year of its existence.

The Maine Clean Elections Act, adopted by voter initiative, requires the state treasurer to transfer \$2 million each year from the state's general fund to the Maine Clean Election

## Sources of Funding

Sources of public financing program funding vary widely from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.<sup>33</sup> Sources of funding can be divided into three categories: annual budget appropriations, dedicated sources such as fines paid by candidates for violating election laws, and tax return provisions. Many jurisdictions combine funding from multiple sources.

### *Annual general fund appropriation*

Most local jurisdictions and at least ten states rely on general fund appropriations to a public financing program fund through the annual budgetary process. Program funding often becomes a political hot potato, however, when the budgetary process is relied upon (opponents of public financing may characterize the program as “welfare for politicians”). Nevertheless, reliance on the budgetary process offers flexibility, allowing funding to grow as participation grows.

### *Dedicated sources*

The public financing laws of many jurisdictions are funded by specific dedicated sources. Some examples include:

- Administrative and civil penalties paid by candidates for violations of campaign finance laws
- Candidate filing fees to appear on the ballot
- Qualifying contributions raised by candidates participating in full public financing programs
- Surcharge on all civil and criminal fines in the state
- Personalized license plate fees

### *Income tax check-offs and other tax code provisions*

Nearly every state with a public financing program has incorporated a program funding mechanism into its tax code. At least fourteen states and the federal government allow income taxpayers to check a box on their tax form to designate a specified amount of their tax to be deposited in a public financing program fund. This funding mechanism is commonly known as a tax check-off and

does not increase the participant's tax bill. Seven states allow income taxpayers to donate a portion of their tax refund to a public financing program fund, often referred to as a tax add-on. This

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**"Cleanly financed elections that bring more citizens into the political process as candidates, donors and organizers are vital to maintaining the health of American democracy."**

—New York Times Editorial<sup>34</sup>

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does increase a participant's tax bill. Finally, four states offer taxpayers deductions or credits for political contributions up to a specified amount.

Income tax check-offs and other voluntary tax-related funding mechanisms have proven unreliable overall. The percentage of

federal taxpayers willing to check a box to fund presidential elections, for example, reached a high point of 28.7% in 1980 and has been declining since.<sup>35</sup> In Maine, however, where the implementation of the Clean Elections system included a state-financed civic education campaign to encourage taxpayers to use the check-off—something that has not been done on the federal level—participation rates have been much higher than at the federal level.

## LEGAL ISSUES

### Spending Limits and *Buckley v. Valeo*

The U.S. Supreme Court opinion in *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976) is the starting point for legal analysis regarding the constitutionality of public campaign financing and spending limits.<sup>36</sup> Public financing of election campaigns does not itself raise any constitutional issues. The *Buckley* Court upheld the federal presidential public financing program, stating that:

Congress may engage in public financing of election campaigns and may condition acceptance of public funds on an agreement by the candidate to abide by specified expenditure limitations. Just as a candidate may voluntarily limit the size of the contributions he chooses to accept, he may decide to forgo private fundraising and accept public funding.<sup>37</sup>

Constitutional issues may arise, however, in relation to the conditions placed upon receipt of public funds. While noting that receipt of public financing may be conditioned on a candidate's acceptance of voluntary spending limits, the Court struck down mandatory spending limits—finding them to be “wholly foreign to the First Amendment.”<sup>38</sup> The *Buckley* Court gave no guidance as to how courts should determine whether a particular spending limit is voluntary or coercive (effectively mandatory). Numerous federal appeals courts, however, have considered claims alleging coercive spending limits.

The “coercion” analysis boils down to the question: Does the public financing program impose such severe burdens on a candidate who chooses not to comply with the so-called voluntary spending limits that a candidate is deemed coerced into compliance with the spending limit? Program provisions that directly burden the First Amendment activities of candidates who choose not to participate are likely to be declared unconstitutional. Program provisions that have no direct impact on the speech of nonparticipants, but instead facilitate more speech by participating candidates, are likely to be upheld.

## Contribution Limits

Recent cases have clarified the Supreme Court's present thoughts on the constitutionality of contribution limits. The *Buckley* Court upheld a \$1,000 contribution limit, reasoning that the government has a compelling interest in avoiding the political corruption or appearance of corruption that might occur when individuals or organizations make large campaign contributions.<sup>39</sup>

In *Nixon v. Shrink Missouri Government PAC*,<sup>40</sup> the U.S. Supreme Court reaffirmed the *Buckley* decision by upholding a \$1,075 limit on contributions to Missouri statewide office candidates—this despite nearly a quarter-century of inflation since the Court first approved \$1,000 limits in *Buckley*. The *Shrink* Court made it clear that contribution limits must be extremely low in order to be found unconstitutional.

Prior to *Shrink*, a number of lower courts had struck down contribution limits lower than \$1,000. Since *Shrink*, however, courts have consistently upheld low contribution limits. In fact, *post-Shrink* decisions have upheld contribution limits of \$100 in Montana,<sup>41</sup> \$200 in Vermont,<sup>42</sup> \$250 in Maine,<sup>43</sup> \$275 in Missouri<sup>44</sup> and \$500 in Florida.<sup>45</sup>

Variable contribution limits, also known as “cap gaps,” have been employed by numerous jurisdictions as incentives for candidates to accept spending limits voluntarily. Under the typical cap gap, a candidate agreeing to spending limits can raise funds under a higher contribution limit than a candidate who rejects the spending limits.

Variable contribution limits have been challenged in court. Some have been struck down and others upheld. Courts have generally based their decisions on the sufficiency of the lower contribution limit. If the lower limit is high enough to permit candidates to raise sufficient campaign funds, then the cap gap may be constitutionally permissible. If the lower contribution limit is too low to allow a candidate to raise sufficient campaign funds, then the cap gap will likely be considered an unconstitutional restriction on candidates subject to it.

## Local Government “Home Rule” and Public Financing

“Home rule” refers to the legal authority of local governments to enact and enforce local laws. The amount of home rule given to local governments is established by state law. Campaign finance activity is also typically regulated by state law. The viability of a local government public financing program depends on the degree to which the local jurisdiction may adopt laws that supplement or, in some instances, conflict with state campaign finance laws.

Local government home rule authority varies from state to state. Under some state laws, local governments possess full legislative authority with respect to municipal affairs. Most states, however, grant local governments more modest home rule, allowing local governments to exercise all legislative authority except that which is expressly prohibited by state law.<sup>46</sup>

Home rule authority is often at issue when local governments adopt campaign finance laws. When the City of Los Angeles enacted its public financing program, for example, a California legislator who had drafted a state law banning the use of public money to fund political campaigns brought a lawsuit against the city.<sup>47</sup> The city defended on the ground that the California Constitution’s home rule provision gives charter cities the authority over all “municipal affairs.”<sup>48</sup> The State Supreme Court agreed, ruling that “nothing . . . is of greater municipal concern than how a city’s tax dollars will be spent; nor anything which could be of less interest to the taxpayers of other jurisdictions.”<sup>49</sup> The Court upheld Los Angeles’ public financing program as a fully legitimate exercise of charter city “home rule” authority.<sup>50</sup> This court decision paved the way for other California charter cities—including Long Beach, Oakland and San Francisco—to adopt public financing laws.

# PROMOTING PUBLIC CAMPAIGN FINANCING IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Efforts to create public financing programs often meet political opposition. Elected officials are typically wary of altering the electoral system that put them in office, particularly in ways that empower political challengers. Special interests often oppose reforms that would loosen their influence over the political process.

Campaign finance reformers should time their efforts carefully to maximize their chances of success. Political scandals, even those unrelated to campaign finance activities, provide important opportunities to build political momentum. They often provide the sense of urgency necessary to overcome arguments that public financing costs too much or is not needed. The more visible and serious the scandal, the stronger the opportunity.

Arizona's Clean Elections program was adopted after the governor was convicted of bank fraud in 1997. Massachusetts' program was adopted in the wake of a multi-million dollar embezzlement scandal involving the state treasurer. The presidential public financing program was implemented in the wake of the Watergate break-in and cover-up. New York City's public financing program was enacted in the aftermath of a bribery scandal that sent several city officials to prison. Los Angeles voters approved a public financing program shortly after the mayor came under fire for accepting a consulting fee from a bank doing business with the city.

Even with political scandals, reformers generally need broad public support to achieve their public campaign financing goals. The support of newspaper editorial boards and other media is invaluable. With public and media support, reformers can achieve powerful and effective public financing reforms in their communities.





# ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> 1907 State of the Union Address.

<sup>2</sup> While this report explores the public financing of candidate campaigns, numerous states provide political parties with public funding which is typically used to finance party conventions. The states of Iowa, Maine, Rhode Island and Utah passed laws in 1973 providing public financing to political parties.

<sup>3</sup> The Road to Clean Elections (2003), a video produced by Haddow Communications for Public Campaign, with assistance from Northeast Action, Arizona Clean Elections Institute Inc. and the Maine Citizen Leadership Fund and funding from Carnegie Corporation of New York and Solidago Foundation.

<sup>4</sup> Id.

<sup>5</sup> Tax credits or deductions for political contributions are offered in Arkansas, Montana, Oregon and Virginia.

<sup>6</sup> By the same token, the franking privilege, wherein the government pays for elected officials' mail to constituents, is a form of public financing available only to incumbents.

<sup>7</sup> For information on pay equity issues, visit the Web site of the National Committee on Pay Equity (<http://www.feminist.com/fairpay/index.htm>).

<sup>8</sup> American Judicature Society, Judicial Selection in the States: Appellate and General Jurisdiction Courts (2002) (<http://www.ajs.org>).

<sup>9</sup> Justice at Stake Campaign, The New Politics of Judicial Elections 4 (2002) (<http://www.faircourts.org>).

<sup>10</sup> The Road to Clean Elections, *supra* note 3.

<sup>11</sup> Center for Governmental Studies, Eleven Years of Reform: Campaign Financing in the City of Los Angeles 23 (2001) (<http://www.cgs.org>).

<sup>12</sup> Center for Governmental Studies, A Statute of Liberty: How New York City's Campaign Finance Law is Changing the Face of Local Elections 1 (2003) (<http://www.cgs.org>).

<sup>13</sup> Aimee Curl, Candidates Hail Clean Elections Law, *Maine Times and News*, Nov. 9, 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Money & Politics Implementation Project, Revitalizing Democracy: Clean Election Reform Shows the Way Forward 30 (2002) (<http://www.publiccampaign.org>).

<sup>15</sup> Rick Klein, Going Forward, Clean Elections Act Alters Terrain in Maine, *Boston Globe*, February 26, 2001.

<sup>16</sup> Aimee Curl, Candidates Hail Clean Elections Law, *Maine Times and News*, Nov. 9, 2000.

<sup>17</sup> New York City Campaign Finance Board, A Decade of Reform 1988-1998, Vol. 1 61 (1998).

<sup>18</sup> Center for Governmental Studies, *supra* note 11, at 53.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.* at 21.

<sup>20</sup> An example of an independent expenditure might be a glossy 5" x 8" mail piece sent by a labor union urging voters to elect a particular candidate or group of candidates endorsed by the union. In some jurisdictions, expenditures by an organization to communicate with its members fall into a "member communication expenditure" exception and are not subject to the same fundraising limitations and disclosure requirements as "independent expenditures." See Cal. Gov't Code § 85312, which removes member communication expenditures from California's definition of "independent expenditure." See also Center for Governmental Studies, On the Brink of Clean: Launching San Francisco's New Campaign Finance Reforms 16 (2002) (<http://www.cgs.org>).

<sup>21</sup> Rick Klein, Going Forward, Clean Elections Act Alters Terrain in Maine, *Boston Globe*, February 26, 2001.

<sup>22</sup> For more specific detail regarding the public financing laws of all twelve jurisdictions, including contribution limits, spending limits and legal citations, visit the Center for Governmental Studies Web site ([www.cgs.org](http://www.cgs.org)) to view the chart entitled Public Financing Laws in Local Jurisdictions, which is updated regularly to reflect changes in the laws.

<sup>23</sup> Center for Governmental Studies, *supra* note 11, at 22.

<sup>24</sup> Campaign finance reform advocates often view the creation of public financing programs for a few offices—such as the programs in Vermont, North Carolina and New Mexico—as a stepping-stone towards eventually covering all elected offices in the jurisdiction.

<sup>25</sup> Center for Governmental Studies, *supra* note 11, at 23.

<sup>26</sup> Center for Governmental Studies, *supra* note 12, at 19.

<sup>27</sup> Candidates may receive additional “rescue funds,” up to double the applicable spending limit, if an opposing candidate exceeds the voluntary spending limit in either the primary or general election.

<sup>28</sup> Center for Governmental Studies, *supra* note 12, at 20.

<sup>29</sup> Public financing has been adopted by a total of sixteen local jurisdictions throughout the United States. Twelve of these programs are currently operating. Four have been terminated by ballot measures, including programs in the City of Seattle and King County, Washington, as well as a program in Sacramento County, California. Cincinnati voters approved a city charter amendment (Issue 6) creating a public financing program in November 2001 by a margin of less than 1% of the total votes cast. Cincinnati voters then repealed the program in November 2002 (Issue 8) by a 10% margin.

<sup>30</sup> Special interests take a hit, *USA Today*, March 28, 2002.

<sup>31</sup> The Arizona public financing program is also funded by a \$5 income tax return check-off, qualifying contributions raised by participating candidates and voluntary donations.

<sup>32</sup> Racial profiling, combined with frequently under-resourced public defenders, may contribute toward a disproportionate number of low-income individuals and people of color paying criminal fines.

<sup>33</sup> The Center for Governmental Studies report, *Where to Get the Money? New Sources of Public Financing For Political Campaigns* (2003) (<http://www.cgs.org>), explores existing and potential new sources of public financing program funding.

<sup>34</sup> *Cleaning Up Massachusetts Politics*, *New York Times*, January 31, 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Center for Responsive Politics, *The Presidential Election Campaign Fund and Tax Checkoff* (1997) (<http://www.opensecrets.org>).

<sup>36</sup> *Buckley v. Valeo*, 424 U.S. 1 (1976).

<sup>37</sup> *Id.* at 57 n. 65.

<sup>38</sup> *Id.* at 49.

<sup>39</sup> *Buckley*, 424 U.S. at 23-35.

<sup>40</sup> *Nixon v. Shrink Missouri Government PAC*, 528 U.S. 377 (2000).

<sup>41</sup> *Montana Right to Life Ass’n. v. Eddleman*, No. CV 96-165-BLG-JDS, slip op. at 9-10 (D. Mont. 2000).

<sup>42</sup> *Landell v. Sorrell*, 118 F. Supp. 2d 459, 463 (D. Vt. 2000).

<sup>43</sup> *Daggett v. Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices*, 205 F.3d 445, 461-62 (1st cir. 2000).

<sup>44</sup> *Shrink Missouri Gov’t PAC v. Adams*, 204 F.3d 838, 840 (8th Cir. 2000).

<sup>45</sup> *Florida Right to Life, Inc. v. Mortham*, No. 6:98-770-CIV-ORL-19A, slip op. at 20-21 (M.D. Fla. Mar. 17, 2000).

<sup>46</sup> For a comprehensive review of both the theory and application of local government home rule law, see Richard Briffault, *Our Localism: Part I—The Structure of Local Government Law*, 90 Colum. L. Rev. 1 (1990).

<sup>47</sup> See *Johnson v. Bradley*, 4 Cal. 4th 389, 392 (1992).

<sup>48</sup> *Id.* at 401.

<sup>49</sup> *Id.* at 407.

<sup>50</sup> *Id.* at 410.

# APPENDIX: SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND EXPERTISE ON PUBLIC FINANCING AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAWS

The following organizations have experience with campaign finance laws and reforms. These organizations research money and politics, publish reports, draft laws or engage in public advocacy. Like all lists, this may become outdated over time. Check with national organizations for a current list of their state affiliates, or visit the Center for Governmental Studies website ([www.cgs.org](http://www.cgs.org)) for current information.

Campaign Finance Institute  
Washington, DC  
(202) 969-8890  
[www.cfinst.org](http://www.cfinst.org)

Campaign Legal Center  
Washington, DC  
(202) 736-2200  
[www.campaignlegalcenter.org](http://www.campaignlegalcenter.org)

Center for Governmental Studies  
Los Angeles, CA  
(310) 470-6590  
[www.cgs.org](http://www.cgs.org)

## NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Ballot Initiative Strategy Center  
Foundation  
Washington, DC  
(202) 223-2373  
[www.ballot.org](http://www.ballot.org)

Brennan Center for Justice  
New York, NY  
(212) 998-6730  
[www.brennancenter.org](http://www.brennancenter.org)

California Voter Foundation  
Davis, CA  
(530) 750-7650  
[www.calvoter.org](http://www.calvoter.org)

Campaign Finance Information  
Center  
Columbia, MO  
(573) 882-2042  
[www.campaignfinance.org](http://www.campaignfinance.org)

Center for Public Integrity  
Washington, DC  
(202) 466-1300  
[www.publicintegrity.org](http://www.publicintegrity.org)

Center for Responsive Politics  
Washington, DC  
(202) 857-0044  
[www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org)

CF Data Exchange  
<http://dataexchange.communityapps.com>  
Free registration required.

Common Cause  
Washington, DC  
(202) 833-1200  
[www.commoncause.org](http://www.commoncause.org)

Democracy 21  
Washington, DC  
(202) 429-2008  
[www.democracy21.org](http://www.democracy21.org)

Democracy Matters  
Hamilton, NY  
(315) 824-8866  
[www.democracymatters.org](http://www.democracymatters.org)

Fannie Lou Hamer Project  
Kalamazoo, MI  
(269) 349-9760  
[www.flhp.org](http://www.flhp.org)

Greenlining Institute  
San Francisco, CA  
(415) 284-7201  
[www.greenlining.org](http://www.greenlining.org)

Justice At Stake  
Washington, DC  
(202) 588-9700  
[www.justiceatstake.org](http://www.justiceatstake.org)

National Civic League  
Denver, CO  
(303) 571-4343  
[www.ncl.org](http://www.ncl.org)

National Institute on Money in State  
Politics  
Helena, MT  
(406) 449-2480  
[www.followthemoney.org](http://www.followthemoney.org)

National League of Women Voters  
Washington, DC  
(202) 429-1965  
[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

National Voting Rights Institute  
Boston, MA  
(617) 624-3900  
[www.nvri.org](http://www.nvri.org)

Public Campaign  
Washington, DC  
(202) 293-0222  
[www.publiccampaign.org](http://www.publiccampaign.org)

Public Citizen  
Washington, DC  
(202) 588-1000  
[www.citizen.org](http://www.citizen.org)

ReclaimDemocracy.org  
Boulder, CO  
(303) 402-0105  
[www.reclaimdemocracy.org](http://www.reclaimdemocracy.org)

U.S. PIRG  
Washington, DC  
(202) 546-9707  
[www.uspirg.org](http://www.uspirg.org)

William C. Velasquez Institute  
San Antonio, TX  
(210) 997-8759  
[www.wcvi.org](http://www.wcvi.org)

## REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Democracy South  
Virginia Beach, VA  
(757) 428-0735  
[www.democracysouth.org](http://www.democracysouth.org)

Midwestern States Center  
Hayward, WI  
(715) 634-5733  
[www.midweststatescenter.org](http://www.midweststatescenter.org)

Northeast Action  
Boston, MA  
(617) 541-0500  
[www.neaction.org](http://www.neaction.org)

Western States Center  
Portland, OR  
(503) 228-8866  
[www.westernstatescenter.org](http://www.westernstatescenter.org)

## STATE ORGANIZATIONS

### ***ALABAMA***

Greater Birmingham Ministries  
Birmingham, AL  
(205) 326-6821  
[www.gbm.org](http://www.gbm.org)

League of Women Voters of Alabama  
Birmingham, AL  
(205) 968-9186  
[www.lwval.org](http://www.lwval.org)

### ***ALASKA***

Alaska Public Interest Research Group  
Anchorage, AK  
(907) 278-3661  
[www.akpirg.org](http://www.akpirg.org)

League of Women Voters of Alaska  
Juneau, AK  
(907) 586-2690  
[cheryl\\_jebe@msn.com](mailto:cheryl_jebe@msn.com)

### ***ARIZONA***

Arizona Citizen Action  
Tucson, AZ  
(520) 884-7797  
[www.azcitizen.org](http://www.azcitizen.org)

Clean Elections Institute Inc.  
Phoenix, AZ  
(602) 462-1114  
[www.azclean.org](http://www.azclean.org)

League of Women Voters of Arizona  
Tucson, AZ  
(602) 604-9148  
[www.azvoterservice.org](http://www.azvoterservice.org)

### ***ARKANSAS***

League of Women Voters of Arkansas  
Little Rock, AR  
(501) 376-7760  
[www.lwv-arkansas.org](http://www.lwv-arkansas.org)

## ***CALIFORNIA***

California Clean Money Campaign  
Los Angeles, CA  
(310) 837-8748  
[www.californiacleanmoney.org](http://www.californiacleanmoney.org)

California Common Cause  
Sacramento, CA  
(916) 443-1792  
[www.commoncause.org/states/california/](http://www.commoncause.org/states/california/)

California Public Interest  
Research Group  
Sacramento, CA  
(916) 448-4516  
[www.calpirg.org](http://www.calpirg.org)

League of Women Voters of California  
Sacramento, CA  
(916) 442-7215  
[www.lwvc.org](http://www.lwvc.org)

The Oaks Project  
Santa Monica, CA  
(310) 392-0522  
[www.consumerwatchdog.org/citizen](http://www.consumerwatchdog.org/citizen)

### ***COLORADO***

Colorado Common Cause  
Denver, CO  
(303) 292-2163  
[www.coloradocommoncause.org](http://www.coloradocommoncause.org)

Colorado Public Interest  
Research Group  
Denver, CO  
(303) 573-7474  
[www.copirg.org](http://www.copirg.org)

League of Women Voters of Colorado  
Denver, CO  
(303) 863-0437  
[www.lwvcolorado.com/](http://www.lwvcolorado.com/)

Public Campaign  
Denver, CO  
(303) 329-8563  
[www.publiccampaign.org](http://www.publiccampaign.org)

## **CONNECTICUT**

Connecticut Citizens Action Group  
West Hartford, CT  
(860) 947-2200  
[www.ccag.net](http://www.ccag.net)

Connecticut Common Cause  
Hartford, CT  
(860) 549-1220  
[www.commoncause.org/states/connecticut/](http://www.commoncause.org/states/connecticut/)

League of Women Voters of  
Connecticut  
Hamden, CT  
(203) 288-7996  
[www.lwvct.org](http://www.lwvct.org)

## **DELAWARE**

Common Cause of Delaware  
Wilmington, DE  
(302) 521-0394

League of Women Voters of Delaware  
Wilmington, DE  
(302) 571-8948  
<http://de.lwv.org>

## **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

League of Women Voters of District of  
Columbia  
Washington, DC  
(202) 347-3020  
[www.dwatch.com/lwvdc/default.htm](http://www.dwatch.com/lwvdc/default.htm)

## **FLORIDA**

Florida Common Cause  
Tallahassee, FL  
(850) 222-3883  
[www.commoncause.org/states/florida/](http://www.commoncause.org/states/florida/)

Florida Consumer Action Network  
Tallahassee, FL  
(850) 224-4006  
[www.fcan.org](http://www.fcan.org)

Florida Public Interest Research  
Group  
Tallahassee, FL  
(850) 224-3321  
[www.floridapirg.org](http://www.floridapirg.org)

League of Women Voters of Florida  
Tallahassee, FL  
(850) 224-2545  
[www.naples.net/presents/lwvf/](http://www.naples.net/presents/lwvf/)

## **GEORGIA**

Common Cause Georgia  
Atlanta, GA  
(404) 601-9901  
[www.commoncause.org/states/georgia/](http://www.commoncause.org/states/georgia/)

League of Women Voters of Georgia  
Atlanta, GA  
(678) 547-0755  
[www.lwvga.org](http://www.lwvga.org)

## **HAWAII**

Hawaii Clean Elections  
Honolulu, HI  
(808) 988-3532  
[www.hiclean.org](http://www.hiclean.org)

Hawaii Elections Project  
Honolulu, HI  
(808) 922-2086  
[www.hiclean.org](http://www.hiclean.org)



League of Women Voters of Hawaii  
Honolulu, HI  
(808) 531-7448  
[www.hi.lwv.org](http://www.hi.lwv.org)

## **IDAHO**

Idahoans for Fair Elections  
Boise, ID  
(208) 385-0260

League of Women Voters of Idaho  
Pocatello, ID  
(208) 232-4033

United Vision for Idaho  
Bosie, ID  
(208) 331-7028  
[www.uvidaho.org](http://www.uvidaho.org)

## **ILLINOIS**

Citizen Action Illinois  
Chicago, IL  
(312) 427-2114  
[www.citizenaction-il.org](http://www.citizenaction-il.org)

Illinois Campaign for Political Reform  
Chicago, IL  
(312) 335-1767  
[www.ilcampaign.org](http://www.ilcampaign.org)

Illinois Common Cause  
Lombard, IL  
(630) 268-2528  
[www.commoncause.org/states/illinois/](http://www.commoncause.org/states/illinois/)

Illinois Public Interest Research  
Group  
Chicago, IL  
(312) 364-0096  
Website: [www.illiniospirg.org](http://www.illiniospirg.org)

League of Women Voters of Illinois  
Chicago, IL  
(312) 939-5935  
[www.lwvil.org](http://www.lwvil.org)

Protestants for the Common Good  
Chicago, IL  
(312) 223-9544  
[www.thecommongood.org](http://www.thecommongood.org)

## **INDIANA**

Citizens Action Coalition of Indiana  
Indianapolis, IN  
(317) 205-3535  
[www.citact.org](http://www.citact.org)

Indiana Alliance for Democracy  
Indianapolis, IN  
(317) 726-1014  
[www.inafd.org](http://www.inafd.org)

League of Women Voters of Indiana  
Indianapolis, IN  
(317) 241-8683  
[www.lwvin.org](http://www.lwvin.org)

## **IOWA**

Iowa Citizen Action Network  
Des Moines, IA  
(515) 277-5077

League of Women Voters of Iowa  
Des Moines, IA  
(515) 777-9739

## **KANSAS**

Kansas Alliance for Campaign Reform  
Topeka, KS  
(785) 235-3022

League of Women Voters of Kansas  
Topeka, KS  
(785) 234-0818  
[www.lwvk.org](http://www.lwvk.org)

## **KENTUCKY**

Clean Money Kentucky  
Frankfort, KY  
(502) 875-6481

Kentucky Common Cause  
Louisville, KY  
(502) 592-5381  
[www.commoncause.org/states/kentucky/](http://www.commoncause.org/states/kentucky/)

League of Women Voters of Kentucky  
Frankfort, KY  
(502) 875-6481  
[www.lwvky.org](http://www.lwvky.org)

## **LOUISIANA**

League of Women Voters of Louisiana  
Baton Rouge, LA  
(225) 344-3326  
Website: [www.lwvla.org](http://www.lwvla.org)

## **MAINE**

League of Women Voters of Maine  
Augusta, ME  
(207) 622-0256  
[www.curtislibrary.com/lwv/](http://www.curtislibrary.com/lwv/)

Maine Citizen Leadership Fund  
Portland, ME  
(207) 780-8657

Maine Common Cause  
Augusta, ME  
(207) 622-5798  
[www.commoncause.org/states/maine/](http://www.commoncause.org/states/maine/)

## **MARYLAND**

League of Women Voters of Maryland  
Annapolis, MD  
(410) 269-0232  
[www.bcpl.net/~lwv/](http://www.bcpl.net/~lwv/)

Maryland Common Cause  
Annapolis, MD  
(301) 261-1566  
[www.commoncause.org/states/maryland/](http://www.commoncause.org/states/maryland/)

Maryland Network for Clean Money  
Silver Spring, MD  
(301) 585-8909

Progressive Maryland  
Silver Spring, MD  
(301) 495-7004  
[www.progressivemaryland.org](http://www.progressivemaryland.org)

## **MASSACHUSETTS**

League of Women Voters of  
Massachusetts  
Boston, MA  
(617) 523-2999  
[www.lwvma.org](http://www.lwvma.org)

Massachusetts Common Cause  
Boston, MA  
(617) 426-9600  
[www.commoncause.org/ma](http://www.commoncause.org/ma)

Massachusetts Money and Politics  
Project  
Boston, MA  
(617) 542-8683  
[www.massvoters.org](http://www.massvoters.org)

Massachusetts Public Interest  
Research Group  
Boston, MA  
(617) 292-4800  
[www.masspirg.org](http://www.masspirg.org)

Massachusetts Voters for  
Clean Elections  
Boston, MA  
(888) 775-2475  
[www.massvoters.org](http://www.massvoters.org)

¿Oiste?  
Boston, MA  
(617) 426-6633  
[www.oiste.net](http://www.oiste.net)

## **MICHIGAN**

League of Women Voters of Michigan  
Lansing, MI  
(517) 484-5383  
[www.lwvmi.org](http://www.lwvmi.org)

Michigan Campaign Finance Network  
Lansing, MI  
(517) 482-7198  
[www.mcfn.org](http://www.mcfn.org)

Michigan Citizen Action  
Kalamazoo, MI  
(929) 349-9170  
[www.michcitizenaction.org](http://www.michcitizenaction.org)

Michigan Common Cause  
Lansing, MI  
(517) 484-5385  
[www.commoncause.org/states/michigan/](http://www.commoncause.org/states/michigan/)

Michigan Public Interest Research Group  
Ann Arbor, MI  
(734) 662-6597  
[www.pirgm.org](http://www.pirgm.org)

## **MINNESOTA**

League of Women Voters of Minnesota  
St. Paul, MN  
(651) 224-5445  
[www.lwvmn.org](http://www.lwvmn.org)

Minnesota Alliance for Progressive Action  
St. Paul, MN  
(651) 641-4050  
[www.mapa-mn.org](http://www.mapa-mn.org)

## **MISSISSIPPI**

League of Women Voters of Mississippi  
Jackson, MS  
(601) 352-4616  
[www.lwv-ms.org](http://www.lwv-ms.org)

## **MISSOURI**

League of Women Voters of Missouri  
St. Louis, MO  
(314) 961-6869  
Website: [www.lwvmo.org](http://www.lwvmo.org)

Missouri Voters for Fair Elections  
St. Louis, MO  
(314) 531-9630  
[www.afsc.org/cro/stl/su2ko2.htm](http://www.afsc.org/cro/stl/su2ko2.htm)

## **MONTANA**

League of Women Voters of Montana  
Bozeman, MT  
(406) 586-1857  
[www.montana.com/lwvmt/](http://www.montana.com/lwvmt/)

Montana Public Interest Research Group  
Missoula, MT  
(406) 243-2908  
[www.pirg.org/montpirg/index.html](http://www.pirg.org/montpirg/index.html)

## **NEBRASKA**

League of Women Voters of Nebraska  
Lincoln, NE  
(402) 475-1411  
[incolor.inebraska.com/lwv-ne/](http://incolor.inebraska.com/lwv-ne/)

Nebraska Common Cause  
Lincoln, NE  
(402) 476-9651  
[www.commoncause.org/states/nebraska/](http://www.commoncause.org/states/nebraska/)

## **NEVADA**

League of Women Voters of Nevada  
Las Vegas, NV  
Tel: (702) 363-4382  
[www.state.nv.us/nucwaste/nts/league.htm](http://www.state.nv.us/nucwaste/nts/league.htm)

Progressive Leadership Alliance of  
Nevada  
Las Vegas, NV  
(702) 791-1965  
[www.planevada.org](http://www.planevada.org)

## ***NEW HAMPSHIRE***

League of Women Voters of New  
Hampshire  
Concord, NH  
(603) 225-5344

New Hampshire Citizens Alliance  
Concord, NH  
(603) 225-2097  
[www.nhcitizensalliance.org](http://www.nhcitizensalliance.org)

## ***NEW JERSEY***

League of Women Voters of New Jersey  
Trenton, NJ  
(609) 394-3303  
[www.lwvnj.org](http://www.lwvnj.org)

New Jersey Citizen Action  
Hackensack, NJ  
(201) 488-2804  
[www.njcitizenaction.org](http://www.njcitizenaction.org)

## ***NEW MEXICO***

League of Women Voters of New  
Mexico  
Santa Fe, NM  
(505) 982-9766  
[www.lwvnm.org](http://www.lwvnm.org)

New Mexicans for Campaign Reform  
c/o Common Cause New Mexico  
(505) 323-6399  
[www.commoncause.org/nm/finreform.htm](http://www.commoncause.org/nm/finreform.htm)

New Mexico Common Cause  
Albuquerque, NM  
(505) 323-6399  
[www.commoncause.org/nm/](http://www.commoncause.org/nm/)

New Mexico Public Interest  
Research Group  
Albuquerque, NM  
(505) 254-1244  
[www.nmpirg.org](http://www.nmpirg.org)

ReVisioning New Mexico  
Albuquerque, NM  
(505) 255-4266  
[www.rvnm.org/](http://www.rvnm.org/)

## ***NEW YORK***

Citizens Action of New York  
Brooklyn, NY  
(718) 694-8290  
[www.citizensactionny.org](http://www.citizensactionny.org)

League of Women Voters of New York  
Albany, NY  
(518) 465-4162  
[www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org)

New York Common Cause  
New York, NY  
(212) 564-4365  
[www.commoncause.org/states/newyork/](http://www.commoncause.org/states/newyork/)

New York Public Interest  
Research Group  
New York, NY  
(212) 349-6460  
[www.nypirg.org](http://www.nypirg.org)

## ***NORTH CAROLINA***

League of Women Voters of North  
Carolina  
Raleigh, NC  
(919) 783-5995  
[www.rtpnet.org/~lwvnc/](http://www.rtpnet.org/~lwvnc/)

North Carolina Common Cause  
Raleigh, NC  
(919) 836-0027  
[www.geocities.com/commoncause\\_nc/](http://www.geocities.com/commoncause_nc/)

North Carolina Public Interest  
Research Group  
Chapel Hill, NC  
(919) 933-5889  
[www.ncpirg.org](http://www.ncpirg.org)

## ***NORTH DAKOTA***

League of Women Voters of North  
Dakota  
Fargo, ND  
(701) 271-9404  
[www.lwvnd.org](http://www.lwvnd.org)

North Dakota Progressive Coalition  
Bismarck, ND  
(701) 224-8090

## ***OHIO***

Citizens Policy Center  
Columbus, OH  
(614) 263-4111  
[www.ohiocitizen.org](http://www.ohiocitizen.org)

League of Women Voters of Ohio  
Columbus, OH  
(614) 469-1505  
[www.lwvohio.org](http://www.lwvohio.org)

Ohio Citizen Action  
Cleveland, Ohio  
(216) 861-5200  
[www.ohiocitizen.org](http://www.ohiocitizen.org)

## ***OKLAHOMA***

Oklahoma Common Cause  
Norman, OK  
(405) 348-9930  
[www.commoncause.org/states/  
oklahoma/](http://www.commoncause.org/states/oklahoma/)

Oklahoman's for Campaign  
Finance Reform  
Oklahoma City, OK  
(405) 732-8112

League of Women Voters of Oklahoma  
Oklahoma City, OR  
(405) 232-8683  
[www.lwvok.org/](http://www.lwvok.org/)

## ***OREGON***

League of Women Voters of Oregon  
Salem, OR  
(503) 581-5722  
[www.lwvor.org](http://www.lwvor.org)

Money in Politics Research Action  
Project  
Portland, OR  
(503) 283-1922  
[www.oregonfollowthemoney.org](http://www.oregonfollowthemoney.org)

Oregon Common Cause  
Salem, OR  
(503) 399-0818  
[www.angelfire.com/or/commoncause/](http://www.angelfire.com/or/commoncause/)

## ***PENNSYLVANIA***

Citizens for Consumer Justice  
Philadelphia, PA  
(215) 569-8220  
[www.ccjustice.org/](http://www.ccjustice.org/)

League of Women Voters of  
Pennsylvania  
Harrisburg, PA  
(717) 234-1576  
[pa.lwv.org/pa/](http://pa.lwv.org/pa/)

Pennsylvania Citizen Action Network  
Reading, PA  
[http://members.aol.com/  
paconsumer/](http://members.aol.com/paconsumer/)

## ***RHODE ISLAND***

League of Women Voters of Rhode  
Island  
East Providence, RI  
(401) 434-6440  
[www.lwvri.org/](http://www.lwvri.org/)

Rhode Island Common Cause  
Providence, RI  
(401) 861-2322  
[www.commoncauseri.org/](http://www.commoncauseri.org/)

## ***SOUTH CAROLINA***

League of Women Voters of South  
Carolina  
Columbia, SC  
(803) 799-7050  
[www.lwvsc.org/](http://www.lwvsc.org/)

South Carolina Common Cause  
Columbia, SC  
(803) 799-0706  
[www.commoncause.org/states/south-carolina/](http://www.commoncause.org/states/south-carolina/)

South Carolina Progressive Coalition  
Lexington, SC  
[www.scpronet.com/](http://www.scpronet.com/)

## ***SOUTH DAKOTA***

League of Women Voters of South  
Dakota  
Sioux Falls, SD  
(605) 336-0298

## ***TENNESSEE***

League of Women Voters of Tennessee  
Nashville, TN  
Tel: (615) 297-7134  
[ourworld.compuserve.com/home-pages/lwvtn/](http://ourworld.compuserve.com/home-pages/lwvtn/)

Tennessee Citizen Action  
Nashville, TN  
(615) 244-2494

## ***TEXAS***

Campaigns for People  
Austin, TX  
(512) 472-1007

League of Women Voters of Texas  
Austin, TX  
(512) 472-1100  
[www.lwvtexas.org](http://www.lwvtexas.org)

Texas Campaign Finance Reform  
Project  
Austin, TX  
(512) 472-1007

Texans for Public Justice  
Austin, TX  
(512) 472-9770  
[www.tpj.org](http://www.tpj.org)

## ***UTAH***

League of Women Voters of Utah  
Salt Lake City, UT  
(801) 272-8683  
[www.xmission.com/~lwvut](http://www.xmission.com/~lwvut)

Utah Progressive Network  
Salt Lake City, UT  
(801) 466-0955  
[www.upnet.org](http://www.upnet.org)

## ***VERMONT***

League of Women Voters of Vermont  
Essex, VT  
(802) 657-0242  
[www.lwvofvt.org](http://www.lwvofvt.org)

Vermont Public Interest Research  
Group  
Montpelier, VT  
(802) 223-5221  
[www.vpirg.org](http://www.vpirg.org)

## ***VIRGINIA***

League of Women Voters of Virginia  
Richmond, VA  
(804) 649-0333  
<http://monticello.avenue.org/leagueva/>

Virginia Public Access Project  
Richmond, VA  
(804) 353-4300  
[www.vpap.org](http://www.vpap.org)

## **WASHINGTON**

League of Women Voters of  
Washington  
Seattle, WA  
(206) 622-8961  
[www.lwvwa.org](http://www.lwvwa.org)

Washington Citizen Action  
Seattle, WA  
(206) 389-0050  
[www.wacitizenaction.org](http://www.wacitizenaction.org)

## **WEST VIRGINIA**

League of Women Voters of West  
Virginia  
Princeton, WV  
(304) 898-6308  
[www.lwvwwv.org](http://www.lwvwwv.org)

Ohio Valley Environment Coalition  
Huntington, WV  
(304) 522-0246  
[www.ohvec.org](http://www.ohvec.org)

West Virginia Citizens Research Group  
Charleston, WV  
(304) 346-5891

## **WISCONSIN**

League of Women Voters of Wisconsin  
Madison, WI  
(608) 256-0827  
[www.lwvwi.org](http://www.lwvwi.org)

Wisconsin Citizens Action  
Milwaukee, WI  
(414) 272-2562  
[www.wi-citizenaction.org](http://www.wi-citizenaction.org)

Wisconsin Common Cause  
Madison, WI  
(608) 256-2686  
<http://commoncause.sitemanager.ims.net/>

Wisconsin Democracy Project  
Madison, WI  
(608) 255-4260  
[www.wisdc.org](http://www.wisdc.org)

## **WYOMING**

Equality State Policy Center  
Lander, WY  
(307) 332-0156  
[www.equalitystate.org](http://www.equalitystate.org)

League of Women Voters of Wyoming  
Powell, WY  
(307) 754-9627  
[lariat.lariat.org/LWV/](http://lariat.lariat.org/LWV/)

# Public financing of elections is perhaps the most important political reform to emerge in the past 30 years.

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**Investing in Democracy** is published by the Los Angeles-based Center for Governmental Studies (CGS). CGS drafts model campaign finance laws and ballot measures, researches campaign finance laws and practices, and provides strategic consulting services to civic organizations and elected officials interested in reforms. This primer is part of a larger project that includes two videos explaining the benefits of public campaign financing to candidates in actual elections.

**Investing in Democracy** has been funded by generous support from Carnegie Corporation of New York.



Center for Governmental Studies