

Resolution on Public Funding and "Clean Money" Campaigns

WHEREAS, the noted journalist, Bill Moyers said in the Washington Spectator on April 2, 2006, in an article titled, "Let's Save Our Democracy by Getting Money out of Politics":

Money is choking our democracy to death. Our elections are bought out from under us and our public officials are doing the bidding of mercenaries. So powerful is the hold of wealth on politics that we cannot say America is working for all Americans. The majority may support such broad social goals as affordable medical coverage for all, decent wages for working people, safe working conditions, a secure retirement, and clean air and water, but there is no government "of, by, and for the people" to deliver on those aspirations. Our system of privately financed campaigns has shut regular people out of any meaningful participation in democracy. Less than one-half of one percent of all Americans made a political contribution of \$200 or more to a federal candidate in 2004. When the average cost of winning a seat in the House of Representatives has topped \$1 million, we can no longer refer to that chamber as "The People's House". Congress belongs to the highest bidder;

WHEREAS, since President Bush's election, the number of registered lobbyists in Washington has doubled and there are now 65 lobbyists for every member of Congress, and according to Moyers, those lobbyists are spending \$200 million per month "whining, dining and seducing federal officials"; and

WHEREAS, because one party controls all branches of government, promoting and protecting corporate greed has become the primary motive behind most current legislative activity; and

WHEREAS, Republican incumbents have been virtually assured of re-election because deficit-spending "pork" has been spread around Red and Would-Be Red states in previously-unheard of amounts. These wasteful, but politically expedient pork projects have been facilitated by a vast array of back room, late night legislative manipulations and 'earmarks'. Since 1994, when "contract with America" Republicans took control, earmarks have increased by 284%; and

WHEREAS, an unwritten rule of the current Congress is that no member will support an ethics investigation of any other member and our 4th Congressional District Representative, Doc Hastings has, as the chair of the House Ethics Committee, aided and abetted a pervasive 'culture of corruption'; and

43 **WHEREAS**, our public representatives need huge sums to finance their campaigns,
44 especially to pay for television advertising; and
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46 **WHEREAS**, Congress is in recess an inordinate amount of time because legislators are
47 spending most of their time fund raising, rather than doing the people's business; and

48 **WHEREAS**, as a direct result of "clean money" campaign reforms, which takes the
49 lobbyists out of the legislative process, Arizona adopted low-cost prescription drug
50 benefits for seniors and Maine has made progress in providing low-cost prescription
51 drugs for its residents; and
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53 **WHEREAS**, Washington State has not yet passed "clean money" legislation, and
54 therefore we are lagging behind several other states. [For the status of the "clean
55 money" campaign in Washington state and a very informative FAQ, see,
56 <http://www.washclean.org> or write to Washington Public Campaigns, PO Box 45088,
57 Seattle, WA 98145-0088.]; and
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59 **WHEREAS**, the *Olympian* reported on January 14, 2006, after a Washington state senate
60 hearing regarding campaign finance reform:
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62 The most controversial idea is public financing, similar to what Arizona and
63 Maine have adopted. It rewards candidates who agree to lower spending levels
64 by giving them public money to spend on campaigns.

65 Backers, who testified in a Senate committee hearing Thursday, said such a
66 system could free the Legislature and state executives from the debts they owe to
67 special interest, which can lead to better policies.

68 "It certainly does open up the process," said Barbara A. Lubin, executive director
69 for the Clean Elections Institute in Phoenix. Arizona went to public financing
70 after a 1998 citizen initiative,

71 She said more women and minorities now run for office, and candidates and
72 voters spend more time talking about issues than dealing with campaign
73 fundraising.
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75 **WHEREAS**, if Washington passed "clean money" reform legislation and 75% of the
76 candidates chose the publicly-funded "clean money," it would cost \$1.36 per
77 Washington citizen per year;
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79 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Washington State Democratic Party, in order
80 to break the link between big donors and public officials and reclaim integrity for our
81 democratic process, support "clean money" campaign finance reform.
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84 Submitted by 12th Legislative District to the Washington State Democratic Party for
85 consideration at its June 3, 2006 convention in Yakima, WA (Date Submitted
86 05/30/2006)

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88 Referred to the WSDCC with a recommendation of "Pass" by the State Party Platform
89 Committee at its June 2, 2006 meeting in Yakima.

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91 Passed by the Washington State Democratic Party at its State Convention held on June
92 3, 2006 in Yakima.