

Resolution on Public Funding of Elections

1
2
3 **WHEREAS** corporations currently exert undue influence over elected federal and state
4 officials and the legislative process due to campaign contributions by their officers,
5 employees and PACs;

6
7 **WHEREAS** the recent Supreme Court Citizen's United decision will make corporate
8 corruption of the system even worse by allowing corporations to fund unlimited
9 advertising in support or in opposition to a candidate;

10
11 **WHEREAS**, when voters in November, 2008 exit polls were asked what issue was very
12 important in determining their vote that day, the top answer – ahead of terrorism, the
13 wars, healthcare, and the economy – was “ethics and corruption”;

14
15 **WHEREAS** polling shows that 80% of Democrats, 78% of Independents, and 65% of
16 Republicans support public funding of federal elections, as do all demographic and
17 geographic subgroups;

18
19 **WHEREAS** polling also shows that voters believe that, under public financing,
20 candidates will win office based on their ideas, not the money they raise, that politicians
21 will more accountable to the voters instead of large contributors, and that the special
22 interests will receive fewer favors, tax breaks and legislative concessions;

23
24 **WHEREAS** the Fair Elections Now Act, which would create an option system of public
25 financing, is modeled after successful systems in Maine and Arizona that have provided
26 an alternative to the “pay to play” systems for a number of political cycles and which
27 have withstood constitutional challenges;

28
29 **WHEREAS** public financing in some form is used in virtually every other democracy
30 on the planet;

31
32 **WHEREAS** the average cost of winning a Senate campaign is expected to exceed \$8
33 million in 2010 and that of a House campaign is nearly \$1.5 million, both historic highs;

34
35 **WHEREAS** the percentage of total contributions coming from small donors (\$200 or
36 less) in Congressional races has dwindled in each election cycle this past decade and hit
37 an all-time low of 11% in 2008;

38
39 **WHEREAS** public office holders spend inordinate amounts of time raising funds to the
40 detriment of governance and what they were elected to do; and

41

42 **WHEREAS** Senator Maria Cantwell and 16 other Senators and more than half of the
43 House Democratic caucus including Jim McDermott and Adam Smith are co-sponsors
44 of The Fair Elections Now Act;

45
46 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Washington State Democratic Party supports
47 the Fair Elections Now Act and commends Senator Cantwell and Reps. McDermott and
48 Smith for their co-sponsorship;

49
50 **THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Washington State Democratic
51 Party calls upon other members of our Congressional delegation (Murray, Larsen,
52 Dicks, Baird and Inslee) to immediately co-sponsor the Act and push for its passage in
53 the current legislative session;

54
55 **THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a system for Public Funding of State-
56 level campaigns be established with the active backing of the Washington State
57 Democratic Party; and

58
59 **THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be
60 transmitted to relevant officials along with a request for response within thirty days,
61 listing the actions they are willing to take to support this resolution or a list of the
62 reasons explaining why it cannot be supported.

63

64

65 Submitted by the Benton County Democrats to the Democratic Central Committee for
66 consideration at its June 26 convention in Vancouver. (Date Submitted 4/13/2010)

67

68 Recommended Pass with amendments by the Subcommittee on Foreign Policy,
69 Government and Political Reform, and the Military. (Date Considered 5/2/2010)

70

71 Recommended Pass with amendments by the State Convention Platform Committee.
72 (Date Considered 6/5/2010)

73

74 The Washington State Democratic Convention "PASSED" this resolution at its June 26,
75 2010 meeting in Vancouver.