



**FAIR ELECTIONS ACT  
Mechanics and  
Implementation**

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‘08: SB 2833 by Sen. Perry

‘07: HB 5594 by Rep. Ajello

**I. HOW THE BILL WORKS**

1. Exploratory Period: The period of time beginning the day after the previous General Election when a candidate is allowed to collect private donations of “seed money.”

Limits on Seed Money

- ★ \$500 for a candidate running for representative
- ★ \$1,000 for a candidate running for senator
- ★ \$90,000 for a candidate running for the office of governor
- ★ \$36,000 for a candidate running for general office other than governor

2. Qualifying Period: A 90-day period of time when a candidate must collect a certain amount<sup>†</sup> of \$5 contributions (“Qualifying Contributions”) from constituents to prove that the candidate holds public interest. Once this money is collected, it is put into the Public Financing of Elections Fund to be allocated to participating candidates for each election cycle<sup>‡</sup>.

<sup>†</sup> Amount of requisite Qualifying Contributions

- ★ 50 Qualifying Contributions for a candidate for representative
- ★ 100 Qualifying Contributions for a candidate for senator
- ★ 2,500 Qualifying Contributions for a candidate for governor
- ★ 1,000 Qualifying Contributions for a candidate for general office other than governor

<sup>‡</sup> Amount of money given in the *Primary Election* cycle

- ★ \$8,000 for a candidate running for the office of representative
- ★ \$16,000 for a candidate running for the office of senator
- ★ \$1,500,000 for a candidate running for the office of governor
- ★ \$600,000 for a candidate running for general office other than governor

<sup>‡</sup> Amount of money given in the *General Election* cycle

- ★ \$12,000 for a candidate running for the office of representative
- ★ \$24,000 for a candidate running for the office of senator
- ★ \$2,250,000 for a candidate running for the office of governor
- ★ \$900,000 for a candidate running for general office other than governor

## II. PROOF OF SUCCESS

- ★ 96% of publicly financed incumbents won election
- ★ 10 of the 11 statewide offices are held by publicly financed candidates in Arizona
- ★ In 2004, voter turnout was a full 67% higher than in 1998 in Arizona. In 2004, the turnout in Maine hit a record high of 73.75%, in a year that 77% of candidates ran as publicly financed candidates
- ★ In Arizona, the number of Latinos running for office has increased by 220%, with nearly 65% choosing to accept public funds. As a consequence, more minority voters are turning out to the polls
- ★ More and more women have successfully sought political office under the public financing system in Maine. Out of these women, fully 42% said they wouldn't have run for office if not for the system.
- ★ The number of contributions to political campaigns is triple the number of private campaign contributions made in Arizona, and five times the number made in Maine

*[Note: The following quotes refer to "Clean Elections." This is because that was the name of the campaigns for public financing systems in Maine and Arizona, the systems on which the Rhode Island legislation is based.]*

## III. FROM THEIR LIPS

"I would recommend the Clean Elections program to anyone. Without Clean Elections I would not have had the financial means to run for office in my district.

"Coming from a rural district, my constituents found the \$5.00 contributions towards my campaign much more affordable than being asked for contributions of \$50.00 or more."

--Arizona Representative Manuel Alvarez

"For all that people have said about Clean Elections getting women and minorities on the ticket and into office, it's absolutely true. It has made a huge impact.

"The number of phone calls that I've received with issues my constituents wanted to discuss has tripled since I was a Clean Elections-elected candidate. I guess they feel more comfortable contacting me since I contacted them in the first place and they know they helped my campaign by giving money."

--Arizona Representative Martha Garcia

"I represent a low-income district. Contrary to the belief that low-income districts could not support the Clean Election program, I find the program most welcome among my constituents. I am in the process of serving my third term in the Maine House of Representatives and have financed every campaign using the Clean Election program. I wouldn't do it any other way. I would lose too many low-income constituents who want to be a part of my re-election."

--Maine Senator Jim Annis