

From their Lips: What people are saying about Public Financing of Elections



“This is a proposal that’s long overdue. I think the system of financing elections in this country is outrageous.”

Bill Bradley, Former United States Senator

With public financing, “I got to spend time with voters as opposed to dialing for dollars, or trying to sell tickets to \$250-a-plate fundraisers. This was much better.”

Janet Napolitano, Governor of Arizona

“For all people have said about [Fair] Elections getting women and minorities on the ticket and into office, it’s absolutely true. It has made a huge impact.”

Martha Garcia, Arizona State Representative

“When I’m walking the halls of the legislature and I see lobbyists from major corporations or even small organizations, I know that I get to make decisions that think about all the people in my constituencies, all the people in my district, and not just specific interest groups”

Beth Edmonds, Maine Senate President

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“I think [Fair Elections] helps individuals make good decisions electing people into office...and gives better opportunities to voters by giving them a varied choice of strong candidates for which to vote...I think [public financing] allows candidates to focus on being productive legislators and not on being productive campaigners”

– *Steve Gallardo, Arizona House Minority Whip*

“I represent a low-income district. Jobs in this area never reach beyond \$12-\$13 an hour. A median income is in the vicinity of \$8 per hour. I am a [public financing] recipient. I find it the only way I can finance my campaign...Finding 50 people to make a \$5 commitment to my campaign is the easiest part of the election process. In fact, folks call and ask why I haven't contacted them for a contribution.”

– *Jim Annis, Maine State Senator*

“I would recommend the [Fair] Elections program to anyone. Without [Fair] Elections I would not have had the financial means to run for office in my district. It is great because it levels the playing field so that nearly anyone can run for office.”

– *Manuel Alvarez, Arizona State Representative*

“It was refreshing not to spend money, or in some cases spend my own...I feel a certain independence from special interest groups. It was nice to be able to say, ‘Thanks for the thought, but I'm [publicly financed].’”

– *Peter Mills, Maine State Senator*

“[Corporations Committee] is a tough job to run and get contributions for, because the only people interested are utilities, and you don't want to take contributions from them. In the old days, there'd be endless debate about who was raising money for who. Now, candidates are talking about the issues.”

– *Marc Spitzer, Arizona Corporations Committee Chairman*

“Now [with Fair Elections], the only interests I'm tied to are my constituents, and they feel a lot more connected to me. My constituent calls have tripled.”

– *Leah Landrum Taylor, Arizona State Representative*

“I'm a farmer, and I think it's important that farmers have a voice in the legislature, but farmers don't have access to buckets of money and our friends don't have buckets of money. It's allowed people, I think, from more common livelihoods to be able to pursue running for office.”

– *Nancy Smith, Maine State Representative*