

COUNCIL AGENDA: 5/23/06
ITEM: 3.8



Memorandum

TO: Rules Committee

FROM: Mayor Ron Gonzales, Vice Mayor Cindy Chavez, Councilmembers Judy Chirco and Ken Yeager

SUBJECT: Agendize item to adopt a resolution in support of AB 583, the California Clean Money and Fair Elections Act

DATE: May 17, 2006

APPROVED:

Ron Gonzales
Cindy Chavez

DATE:

5/17/06

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Ken Yeager

Agendize the following item for the May 23, 2006 council agenda:

Adoption of a resolution supporting Assembly Bill 583 (Hancock), the California Clean Money and Fair Elections Act currently being heard in the State Senate Committee on Elections, Reapportionment, and Constitutional Amendments. The City Attorney shall draft this resolution and forward it to our state delegation immediately after Council action.

BACKGROUND:

This bill amends the Political Reform Act of 1974 by enacting the California Clean Money and Fair Elections Act of 2006, which establishes a voluntary system of public financing of political campaigns for all state elective offices. Importantly, this bill provides California voters the opportunity to address this issue by submitting these provisions for voter approval.

The amount of money needed in order to run for public office and to compete against privately funded interest groups and PACs has grown considerably at the local, state, and national levels in the past several years. The current privately funded system hinders the average citizen lacking great wealth from participating effectively in the political arena, thus undermining the democratic process. Public financing of political campaigns will both improve accountability of elected officials and free them from spending inordinate

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amounts of time fundraising thus enabling them to spend more time with voters than with donors.

This measure provides substantial public financing to candidates who demonstrate support by collecting numerous small contributions. Participating candidates receive a public financing grant that pays for virtually all campaign activities. In exchange for receiving the public funds, candidates must agree not to raise any funds privately, with the exception of those small contributions collected to demonstrate support. Non-participating candidates would continue to be subject to existing contribution limits.

Voters in Maine, Massachusetts, and Arizona have approved similar laws that provide substantial public financing to state candidates who demonstrate support by collecting a number of small contributions. Support for AB 583 is consistent with Council's recent action to study a "Voter-Owned Campaigns" initiative.

COORDINATED:

This memorandum has been coordinated with the Office of Intergovernmental Relations.