

# Summary of Key Features and Provisions of Proposed Judicial Bill

## Public Financing of Campaigns for Positions on the State Supreme Court

This summary prepared by Washington Public Campaigns, 12-13-08.  
The proposed bill is still being drafted. Provisions and details subject to change.

### Summary:

This is a bill to establish a program of optional public financing of campaigns for the Washington State Supreme Court. The legislative intent is to reduce the likelihood or appearance of corruption or undue influence by private special interest campaign contributions, and to preserve the integrity of, and public confidence in, the state's highest court, by allowing candidates the option of financing their campaigns solely or primarily on public funding.

### Qualifying for the program:

To qualify to participate in the program and receive public financing, candidates must:

- file an intent to participate and to abide by program requirements upon certification;
- generate at least **\$38,875** (aggregate total) in Qualifying Contributions, from at least **500 contributors** who are natural persons and residents of Washington state, in amounts **at least \$10 but no more than \$400** (indexed as one-quarter of maximum campaign contributions allowed by state law)

### Seed funds available during qualifying period:

Candidates may use personal funds up to \$5,000 plus up to one-quarter of the Qualifying Contributions they collect, as "seed funds" to generate the necessary Qualifying Contributions.

### Campaign funds made available to participants (*proposed amounts subject to revision*):

**Primary election:** Amount of base grant depends on the number of candidates filing, as:

2 candidates: Base grant is 120 times the filing fee (= \$186,600)

3 candidates: Base grant is 100 times the filing fee (= \$155,500)

4+ candidates: Base grant is 90 times the filing fee (= \$139,950)

No opponent: Base grant is 4 times the filing fee (= \$4,100), plus all QC's collected.

**General election campaign:** Base grant for primary winners, 80 times the filing fee (= \$124,400).

### Rescue funds provided; upper limit specified; up to 60% available in primary:

Supplemental "rescue funds" are provided, up to a set upper limit (500 times filing fee overall), to match overspending by opponents or to match IE spending by 527s, etc. Up to 75 percent of maximum rescue funds may be claimed and used in the primary race - if triggered as described.

### Private fundraising authorized if state funds are insufficient to meet funding obligations:

Whenever funds from the State Judicial Campaign Fund are insufficient to provide rescue funds as authorized, campaigns for participating candidates may accept additional funds collected under the same restrictions that apply to accepting Qualifying Contributions (above), up to total amounts that would otherwise be available as state-provided rescue funds.

### Funding source(s):

This program is authorized to be funded with revenue from the **Unclaimed Property** revenue stream and other sources as may be determined. Appropriated funds from [sources t.b.a.] will be deposited to newly created State Judicial Campaign Fund, in the amount of [\$ -----] each biennium.

### Minimum funding necessary to start; perhaps automatic appropriation:

This program will not become operational until a sum of at least [\$3 million] is appropriated and deposited in the State Judicial Campaign Fund - a provision to assure the program will not be underfunded at the start. Perhaps, automatic appropriation triggered by favorable revenue forecast.