

## **Tough questions and answers: Arguments opponents use against public funding of campaigns**

### ***I don't want my tax money spent on political campaigns.***

Guess what, folks? Your tax dollars *already are* used to fund political campaigns. It's just through the back door – in hidden taxes – and at a cost hundreds of times more than if you simply paid for the campaigns up front. Wouldn't you rather pay a fraction of the cost, up front, and in a way that levels the playing field for all candidates, including third party and Independents? That's what the **Clean Money** system provides.

### ***I don't want my tax money going to candidates I don't agree with.***

Guess what again? Through this same *hidden tax system* your dollars already are going to candidates you don't agree with. At the very least you are funding the salaries of all incumbents when they are campaigning and fundraising, while challengers must pay their own.

With public funding you are really funding a **Clean Money** electoral “system” that returns democracy to the electoral process. Unless you are one of the 1% who gives over \$200 to candidates, your voice is simply not being heard. Don't waste sending your money.

### ***I don't want tax money spent on projects I don't agree with.***

Translated, most people don't want their money spent on wasted projects. But that will continue as long as we have special interests controlling state spending. In truth, our taxes are always spent on one or more projects we don't agree with. We must eliminate the projects that are not in the best interest of the general public, and only full public funding of the electoral process will accomplish that.

### ***Public financing of campaigns is “welfare for politicians.”***

There is no better system of “welfare for politicians” than our current moneyed system. Instead of being beholden to their constituents, politicians need only satisfy the few moneyed interests who fund their elections. Incumbents enjoy a 16-to-1 cash advantage and a 9-to-1 reelection advantage. That's a kind of “welfare” that simply can't be matched elsewhere.

### ***But we can vote the bad ones out!***

Maybe, but likely not. Most voters do not research legislative voting records, and politicians know it. People vote mostly on the basis of name recognition and party rhetoric. That's why money – and lots of it – is so important to the incumbents who don't want to spend their time with constituents. It buys TV time and other media to get their names heard, loud and clear, thus overwhelming challengers without access to wealthy contributors.

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***Public financing of campaigns protects incumbents.***

What better protection do incumbents need than their reelection rate of 90% under the current system?

Besides, if public financing really did protect incumbents, they'd have passed it years ago. But it does just the opposite and that's why they often don't support it. The **Clean Money** system levels the playing field for challengers, and good politicians don't mind that. The inept ones like things just as they are, thank you.

**Public financing violates freedom of speech.**

Not true, though that is a safe argument that protects politicians at the polls.

Actually, since the two reform proposals (Clean Money and SB12) are voluntary and candidates can opt out of either, they pass constitutional muster. Clean Money, in fact, has already passed constitutional challenges in both Maine and Arizona. Further, it doesn't violate free speech; it ensures that one's megaphone (cash) does not drown out the speech of those without wealth or access to it.

Those who argue that their money represents their speech can still give money to the candidates who (a) want to take it, and (b) have opted out of the public grant. But without the optional public grant, only those voters with sufficient cash in the bank can sway the direction of elections — that, in itself, violates the 14th Amendment right of equal protection for those without the cash to make political contributions.

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***Do political parties (and organizations) support public funding of campaigns?***

When candidates have the option to run using public financing, the campaign is about issues and voters – instead of about money. Voters – rather than dollars - control the outcome.

So thoughtful organizations realize that the power rests with their membership, and use their resources accordingly to raise voter awareness and to generate support for candidates who agree with voters' views on the important issues. Parties with broad voter support do well.