

California Interfaith Coalition
LEGISLATIVE ISSUES BRIEFING

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Clean Money - Full Public Funding of Election Campaigns
Make Government Accountable to the Voters

As people of faith, we seek to remove barriers to civic engagement - that all eligible voters, regardless of financial or social position, may participate fully and equally in our democracy.

THE PROBLEM:

- Good people with new ideas, but without access to big money, cannot afford to run for office.
- Candidates and lawmakers spend too much time chasing money instead of interacting with voters and making sound public policy decisions.
- 95% of races are won by the candidate spending the most, often making campaign contributors more important to politicians than the voters
- Big money special interests and not public interest dictate government decision-making, negatively impacting our lives, health, environment, medical care, transportation, education...
- Current campaign finance system has engendered pay-to-play environment and has greatly damaged the public's trust in government.

THE SOLUTION: Clean Money full public funding of election campaigns

- Clean Money is an innovative and proven campaign finance solution that reduces the corrupting influence of money in politics by allowing qualified candidates to run for office with public funds instead of big donor dollars.
- Clean Money candidates, who raise the necessary qualifying contributions, voluntarily forgo all private campaign money in exchange for full public funding of their campaign.
- Clean Money eliminates wealth and wealthy connections as prerequisites for running for the office, opening up the ballot to allow more good people to run.
- Candidates can spend more time out in the community listening to the needs and concerns of voters, rather than courting donors.
- Cleanly-elected candidates are accountable to the voters who elect them, not big money campaign contributors.
- Clean Money would restore the public's trust in government.

A.B. 583: The California Clean Money and Fair Elections Act

- A.B. 583 (Hancock) sets up a system of full public funding of state election campaigns and, if passed, would place a measure on the ballot to adopt full public funding for all statewide and legislative races here in California. **AB583 passed the CA State Assembly 1/30/2006.**
- AB 583 is based on the successful Clean Money systems already working in Arizona and Maine. In these states, Clean Money has led to higher voter turnout, more women and minorities running for office, and, since elected officials do not have to fundraise for their reelection, more time to focus on the needs and concerns of their constituents.

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