



The League of Women Voters
Berkeley • Albany • Emeryville

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The board of the League of Women Voters of Berkeley, Albany, Emeryville does not currently support the ballot measure for a charter amendment for public financing of campaigns for Mayor, City Council and other city offices that the City Council voted to put on the November 2, 2004 ballot. This position means that the League is neutral on this issue at this time, neither supporting nor opposing it.

This measure was originally proposed by Common Cause and modified by the Council. The measure would enable public funding, but would permit the Council to put it into effect only when the Council decided it was feasible.

The League has strong national and state policies in support of campaign finance reform. The League has campaigned on both national and state levels for legislation and ballot measures that would enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office. Currently, for example, the League is supporting AB 2949, the California Clean Money and Fair Elections Act of 2004, a voluntary system for public financing of political campaigns for all legislative and statewide elective offices. In March the League of Women Voters of the United States actively supported the Presidential Funding Act, S. 1913, which would make the changes necessary to protect and enhance the voluntary, partial public financing system for presidential primary and general elections.

Whenever the League evaluates a measure, it balances the measure before it with the whole range of measures and issues supported by the League. The League also has many strong national, state and local policies to support adequate funding of public services of many kinds and, in particular, adequate funding of schools, social services, mental and other health services, and many services to families, children and young people.

In the current state and local budget crisis, with so many severe cuts being proposed and with so many tax measures being proposed for purposes also strongly supported by the League, the Board has decided that this is not an appropriate time to adopt a measure that would use hundreds of thousands of dollars of public funds to pay the costs of local candidates running for local office.

But to even put this measure on the ballot, when there will probably be so many local tax and other measure seeking approval and so many state propositions proposed for the November ballot, would, we believe, make it harder to pass the measures needed to support more essential services.

Details follow

From LWVC Bill Status Report of June 2, 2004

CAMPAIGN FINANCING AB 2949 Hancock League position; SUPPORT

Establishes the California Clean Money and Fair Elections Act of 2004, a voluntary system for public financing of political campaigns for all legislative and statewide elective offices. Candidates who show a broad base of support by collecting a specified number of \$5 "qualifying contributions" and agree to spending limits would use only public funds for their campaigns.

Passed by Assembly Elections, Redistricting and Constitutional Amendments Committee (5-2). Held on Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.

National and state public financing positions are cited below:

LWV United States Policy Position: Campaign Finance Reform

Campaign Finance: Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

Campaign Finance Reform Action: Leagues in Action for Public Financing

For many years, state and local Leagues have been active in support of public financing of election campaigns. The Leagues in Arizona, Massachusetts and Maine have seen success, but their work is not over. Other Leagues, including those in Oregon and Missouri whose ballot measures were unsuccessful in 2000, remain committed. Here are reports from some of these active Leagues across the nation.

LWV California

POSITION IN BRIEF: *Support state campaign finance practices for candidates and advocates of ballot measure positions which will ensure full disclosure of campaign contributions and expenditures and enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office.*

POSITIONS

1. Public reporting of campaign contributions and expenditures by all candidates and advocates of ballot measure positions in statewide elections.
2. Effective monitoring and enforcement.
3. Measures which will broaden the base of campaign financing, including tax credits/deductions for those who contribute to political parties, candidates, and ballot measure campaigns and some public financing to candidates for state office through an "income tax check-off" system and direct government appropriations. Public funding measures should include realistic limits on contributions and expenditures.
4. Realistic limits on contributions by individuals and groups to candidates and ballot measure campaigns.
6. A requirement that each candidate have one central committee responsible for coordinating, controlling, and reporting all contributions and expenditures.