

Ballot Measure 3

Bill Providing For Public Funding In Campaigns

STATEMENT IN OPPOSITION

Alaskans should Vote NO on Measure 3. Taxpayer-funded political campaigns will **not** reduce corruption in Alaska. They will **not** reduce the influence of special interest groups. They will **not** make legislators more accountable to voters. They will **not** produce a single positive change in Alaskan politics or elections.

What they will do is vastly increase the cost of political campaigns—and cost taxpayers millions of additional dollars per year.

High-powered special interest groups actually can increase their aid to candidates under systems of taxpayer-funded campaigns, because they can provide significant assistance in gathering small donations required to qualify for taxpayer funds. Honest, well-intentioned, individual citizens are no match for such a well-oiled, well-organized special interest effort.

This measure is nothing more than an incumbent protection act.

Taxpayer-funded political campaigns will reduce political speech and make it harder for challengers to defeat incumbents. Candidates rely on campaign spending to promote their ideas, experience, and priorities. Challengers—who don't have the benefit of a public forum to speak from—typically need to spend more money to effectively communicate their message. But because taxpayer-funded candidates must agree to limit their spending, incumbents who are already known have an unfair advantage few challengers can overcome.

The fact is experts have consistently found that campaign contributions do not affect legislative votes. The recent VECO scandal clearly demonstrates this—the oil services company was forced to directly bribe legislators to get the vote they desired because campaign contributions failed to have any impact.

In Arizona the experience has been that legislators who relied on voluntary contributions for political campaigns voted no differently than legislators who took taxpayer dollars. In fact, legislators who must rely upon voluntary contributions are far more likely to vote as their constituents want in order to avoid retribution at the polls.

Nor will giving taxpayer dollars to politicians reduce the influence of special interest groups. Lobbyists and representatives from powerful unions, big business, and well-financed trade associations will continue to buttonhole legislators as they have before. But if Measure 3 is enacted, **individual citizens—prevented from supporting the candidates of their choice—have less direct influence than ever.**

On top of all this, providing taxpayer funds to politicians actually limits the types of candidates who get elected to the legislature. Recent research found that the number of legislators from business and law, the traditional backgrounds for legislators, did not change once taxpayers were forced to pick up the bill for political campaigns in Arizona and Maine. The number of new candidates from other professions did not increase at all. **The number of women actually declined in both states.**

Finally, think of the worst wacko you would never want in public office. Your tax dollars will help this wacko try to get elected.

Letting government divvy out tax dollars to the candidates it selects will deepen the problem, not provide a solution. Vote NO on Measure 3 - protect your right to choose. Incumbent politicians don't need protection - citizens and taxpayers do. Vote NO.

Dick Randolph, Chair
Committee to Stop Corruption

Kenneth Jacobus

The statement printed on this page is the opinion of the author(s) and is presented as submitted to the Division of Elections.