

Voter-Owned Elections in Legislative Races

It's time to test Voter-Owned Elections for N.C. legislative races

- The pressure on legislative candidates to raise money continues to rise. The average amount spent on General Assembly races has jumped more than four-fold over the last decade.
- Public financing provides an alternative to the money chase and rewards grassroots campaigning. It is essentially a "sweat equity" program that requires the candidate who gathers many small donations from registered voters in order to qualify for access to public funds.
- The program is voluntary – no candidate is forced to participate.
- A pilot program could involve several districts chosen by a super-majority vote of the Board of Elections, with recommendations from majority and minority leaders in the General Assembly
- Funding for the program is voluntary. Money would come from taxpayer-designated funds, so taxpayers are not compelled to support the program or support a candidate they oppose.

Voter-Owned Elections is already working in North Carolina.

In the 2004 election:

- 14 of 16 NC Court of Appeals and Supreme Court candidates tried to qualify for public funds
- 12 of the 16 candidates (including 4 of the 5 winners) qualified and received \$1.5 million
- 4 million households received the Judicial Voter Guide about all 16 candidates

In the 2006 election:

- 8 of 12 general election top-court candidates are certified (others tried, but did not qualify)
- From \$144,000 to \$216,650 has been awarded to each candidate for the general elections
- In the first case of rescue funds, a candidate got extra funds to match an opponent

Voter-Owned Elections is working in other states.

- In Arizona and Maine, a majority of Republican and Democratic legislative candidates now use VOE public-financing systems, which began in 2000
- Connecticut's legislature just adopted the program, and New Jersey has a pilot underway.

Bills to provide pilot program for legislative districts.

- [CLICK HERE](#) for a summary of a bill providing public financing in a small number of legislative districts
- [CLICK HERE](#) for the bill introduced in the House in 2007 for a legislative pilot program

- [CLICK HERE](#) for the bill introduced in the Senate in 2007 for a legislative pilot program