

1 S.220

2 Introduced by Senator Baruth

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Elections; campaign finance; public financing option

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to amend

7 statutes relating to the public financing of campaigns by:

8 (1) extending the period by which a person seeking public financing  
9 may officially become a candidate;

10 (2) explicitly permitting a political party to solicit qualifying  
11 contributions on behalf of a candidate seeking public financing; and

12 (3) allowing a political party to make expenditures supporting a publicly  
13 financed candidate, so long as the party and the candidate do not coordinate on  
14 those expenditures.

15 An act relating to the public financing of campaigns

16 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

17 Sec. 1. 17 V.S.A. § 2983 is amended to read:

18 § 2983. VERMONT CAMPAIGN FINANCE GRANTS; CONDITIONS

19 (a) A person shall not be eligible for Vermont campaign finance grants if,  
20 prior to ~~February 15 of the general election year during any two-year general~~

1 ~~election cycle~~ January 1 of the odd-numbered year preceding the general  
2 election, he or she becomes a candidate by announcing that he or she seeks an  
3 elected position as Governor or Lieutenant Governor or by accepting  
4 contributions totaling \$2,000.00 or more or by making expenditures totaling  
5 \$2,000.00 or more.

6 (b) A candidate who accepts Vermont campaign finance grants shall:

7 (1)~~(A) not~~ Not solicit, accept, or expend any contributions except  
8 qualifying contributions, Vermont campaign finance grants, and contributions  
9 authorized under section 2985 of this chapter, which contributions may be  
10 solicited, accepted, or expended only in accordance with the provisions of this  
11 subchapter;

12 (B) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision 2944(c)(1) of this  
13 chapter, an expenditure described in that subdivision that is made by a political  
14 party that is associated with the candidate shall not be presumed to be a related  
15 expenditure made on behalf of the candidate if it is not intentionally facilitated  
16 by, solicited by, or approved by the candidate or the candidate's committee.

17 (2) ~~deposit~~ Deposit all qualifying contributions, Vermont campaign  
18 finance grants, and any contributions accepted in accordance with the  
19 provisions of section 2985 of this chapter in a federally insured  
20 noninterest-bearing checking account; ~~and~~.

1           (3) ~~not~~ Not later than 40 days after the general election, deposit in the  
2 Secretary of State Services Fund, after all permissible expenditures have been  
3 paid, the balance of any amounts remaining in the account established under  
4 subdivision (2) of this subsection.

5           Sec. 2. 17 V.S.A. § 2984 is amended to read:

6           § 2984. QUALIFYING CONTRIBUTIONS

7           (a) In order to qualify for Vermont campaign finance grants, a candidate for  
8 the office of Governor or Lieutenant Governor shall obtain during the Vermont  
9 campaign finance qualification period the following amount and number of  
10 qualifying contributions for the office being sought:

11           (1) for Governor, a total amount of no less than \$35,000.00 collected  
12 from no fewer than 1,500 qualified individual contributors making a  
13 contribution of no more than \$50.00 each; or

14           (2) for Lieutenant Governor, a total amount of no less than \$17,500.00  
15 collected from no fewer than 750 qualified individual contributors making a  
16 contribution of no more than \$50.00 each.

17           (b) A candidate shall not accept more than one qualifying contribution  
18 from the same contributor and a contributor shall not make more than one  
19 qualifying contribution to the same candidate in any Vermont campaign  
20 finance qualification period. For the purpose of this section, a qualified  
21 individual contributor means an individual who is registered to vote in

1 Vermont. No more than 25 percent of the total number of qualified individual  
2 contributors may be residents of the same county.

3 (c) Each qualifying contribution shall indicate the name and town of  
4 residence of the contributor and the date accepted and be acknowledged by the  
5 signature of the contributor.

6 (d) A candidate may retain and expend qualifying contributions obtained  
7 under this section. A candidate may expend the qualifying contributions for  
8 the purpose of obtaining additional qualifying contributions and may expend  
9 the remaining qualifying contributions during the primary and general election  
10 periods. Amounts expended under this subsection shall be considered  
11 expenditures for purposes of this chapter.

12 (e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit a political party  
13 from soliciting qualifying contributions on behalf of a candidate.

14 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

15 This act shall take effect on passage.