

JAN 25 2006

S.B. NO. 2444

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC FUNDING
ELECTION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the pervasive
2 influence of private contributions and expenditures on public
3 elections in the State undermines democracy and the rights of
4 all Hawaii citizens to vote for the candidate of their choice
5 and to enjoy equal and meaningful participation in the
6 democratic process. These rights are guaranteed by the First
7 and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, as
8 well as sections 1, 2, 4, and 8 of article I of the state
9 constitution.

10 The legislature further finds that candidates for statewide
11 office who lack access to personal wealth or wealthy donors are
12 precluded from running a competitive campaign because their
13 voices are drowned out by those who can afford to saturate their
14 constituents with television, radio, and other expensive mass-
15 media communications. Furthermore, the dramatic influx of
16 private money, coupled with recent high-profile law enforcement
17 investigations and prosecutions of campaign finance abuses, have



1 undermined the public's confidence in the political process and
2 fueled the public perception of corruption in Hawaii politics.

3 The legislature believes that the dominance of private
4 funding in state elections also burdens candidates and elected
5 officials with the incessant rigors of fundraising and decreases
6 the time available to carry out their public responsibilities.

7 Further, private funding creates a danger of actual
8 corruption by compelling elected officials to accept money from
9 private interests that are directly affected by governmental
10 actions.

11 The purpose of this Act is to create a comprehensive public
12 funding system for state elective office political campaigns
13 that will offer a viable and competitive alternative to private
14 funding sources, thereby substantially reducing or eliminating
15 the deleterious effects of private financing of state office
16 political campaigns.

17 SECTION 2. Candidates for elected offices of the State who
18 voluntarily run for office as a comprehensive public funding
19 candidate shall:

20 (1) Seek comprehensive public funding for the primary
21 election campaign period if the candidate:



1 (A) Resides in the district from which election is
2 sought;

3 (B) Agrees not to accept or use any private money,
4 including loans, and, if elected, while in office
5 until the next election cycle begins; and

6 (C) Collects the required number of \$5 qualifying
7 contributions from registered voters in the
8 district;

9 (2) Receive funding from general revenues and report any
10 expenditure electronically within twenty-four hours of
11 spending or making a commitment to spend campaign
12 funds; and

13 (3) Be guilty of a misdemeanor if the candidate knowingly,
14 intentionally, or recklessly violates any provision of
15 this Act.

16 A person convicted under this section shall be disqualified
17 from holding elective public office for a period of four years
18 from the date of conviction and, if elected, shall be removed
19 from office.

20 SECTION 3. The campaign spending commission shall
21 establish an independent, bipartisan committee to review the



1 progress of the comprehensive public funding program established
2 under this Act.

3 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

4

INTRODUCED BY: 

By Request



SB 2444

Report Title:

Silver Legislature; Campaign Financing; Comprehensive Funding

Description:

Establishes a comprehensive public funding program for qualified candidates for public office.

