

**From:** [Shannon Matson](#)  
**To:** [Standards of Conduct](#)  
**Subject:** Support Publicly Funded elections and campaign financing reform  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 28, 2022 11:41:34 AM

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Aloha Commissioners,

My name is Shannon Matson, I reside on Hawai'i Island. I supported and advocated for the public funding pilot program that was developed and adopted here in Hawai'i County a decade ago. Also I ran as a state house candidate in 2020 on partial public funding. I am attempting to do so again this election season.

I am recommending and supporting the following reforms shared with me by Gary Hooser to help reduce corruption and encourage equity and public participation in our election process. Please evaluate and incorporate the following recommendations into the work you are doing to make meaningful changes to how politics function in Hawai'i.

**\*Full public funding for all State and County elections in Hawai'i.**

**\*Banning the solicitation or acceptance of campaign donations during the legislative session.**

**\*Reducing the cap on campaign donations** from from \$6,000, \$4,000 and \$2,000 to \$100, \$100, and \$100. Montana caps their maximum donation for state legislative races at \$180 per election.

**\*Banning contributions from corporations and unions** as 21 other states now do.

**\*Limit candidate campaign war chests.** This is done in Alaska where candidates can only carry forward a small portion of their campaign account from one election to the next. This law was upheld by the Alaska Supreme Court which noted that when a candidate who is unopposed raises money and squirrels it away for a future election, they are effectively circumventing donation limits for that future election.

**All 5 are important, but the reform that makes all other reforms possible is the public funding of elections.** Ban and limit big-money special interests and replace it with public funds to be used to elect public servants beholden only to the public.

**The State of Maine has such a program and it has proven to be a huge success.**

Essentially, candidates for public office in Maine who wish to participate in the program must gather X number of signatures and \$5 donations, which qualifies them then for public funding sufficient to run a credible campaign. The number of signatures and \$5 donations is intended to prove the candidate is legitimate and varies depending on the race (gubernatorial, state senate or house, or county/city positions).

Hawaii presently has a program that provides some matching funds. While this program is utilized by some candidates in some races, it is significantly underutilized, underfunded, and falls far short of the Maine "Clean Elections" model.

There is no question that special interest money has a corrupting influence on politics and government. There is no question that those entities who have the ability to supply the money have a significantly greater amount of influence on government policymakers.

**Mahalo,  
Shannon Matson**

Sent from my iPhone