

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5446

As of Third Reading, March 16, 1999

Title: An act relating to public funding of campaigns for local offices.

Brief Description: Allowing public funding of local office campaigns.

Sponsors: Senators Franklin, Patterson, Fraser, McAuliffe, Snyder, B. Sheldon, Thibaudeau, Bauer, Kline, Gardner, Kohl-Welles and Spanel.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State & Local Government: 2/24/99, 3/1/99 [DP, DNP].
Failed Senate, 3/16/99, 22-25.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Patterson, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Haugen and Kline.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Hale, Horn and McCaslin.

Staff: Eugene Green (786-7405)

Background: Initiative measure 134 passed by the voters in November 1992, regulates political contributions and campaign expenditures and prohibits the use of public funds to finance political campaigns for state or local offices. Some local governments had ordinances providing the availability of public funds for political campaigns for municipal offices.

Summary of Bill: The prohibition on the use of public funds to finance political campaigns for local offices is eliminated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: It is a permissive local option. The City of Seattle was the first jurisdiction in the country to establish partial public funding in 1978. They should not be prohibited from continuing to use tax money in their control in this way. With public funding, the number of contributors went up and average contribution went down. Therefore, reliance of big givers— was lessened.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Carolyn Van Noy, City of Seattle, Ethics & Elections Commission; Chuck Sauvage, Common Cause; Margaret Pegeler, Council member, City of Seattle.