



## State of Connecticut

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## Testimony in Support of Senate Bill Number 1126 GAE Committee March 27, 2015

Chairmen Jutila and Cassano, Ranking Members Smith and McLachlan and Members of the GAE Committee, the House Republican Caucus would like to thank the Committee for raising Senate Bill Number 1126: AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAWS.

Campaign finance is an important issue, not just to the House Republican Caucus, but to the General Assembly and all the citizens of our state who deserve to participate in clean elections. While this bill in front of the committee today takes some steps to provide Connecticut with additional transparency in elections, we believe that more needs to be done to fix this broken system.

The House Republican Caucus made several proposals this legislative session to reform campaign finance including reducing grant size, requiring legislative approval for the increase of grants, and eliminating grants to unopposed candidates. These proposals were designed to reduce the state taxpayers' cost, (which has continued to grow throughout the life of the program) while still providing a clean election funding system. However, none of our proposals were included in Senate Bill 1126.

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This past election cycle, the state provided over \$33 million dollars in grant money to candidates. Furthermore, the state doled out funds to 15 unopposed candidates. A 25% reduction in grant size alone would have saved the state over \$8 million dollars and would still have provided a candidate for state senate over \$70,000 dollars.

Additionally, the House Republican Caucus proposed several changes that would have put substantial limitations on outside interest money. These proposals include capping the amount of organizational expenditures state central committees can make; prohibiting PACs from making independent expenditures on behalf of a candidate when such candidate solicited on behalf off of that PAC; and prohibiting federal account funds from being expended on state government candidates. These proposals were offered to directly address loopholes that were exploited during the most recent election.

This past governor's race made a mockery of our Citizens Election Program. Special interest money poured into the state, spending over \$18 million on independent expenditures and funneling money to state candidates through a federal account loophole. Moreover, another candidate was able to triple the amount of campaign funds he received through contributions from a State central committee. These types of blatant disregard for transparency and independence in state elections should not and must not be tolerated.

I urge the GAE Committee to amend Raised Bill Number 1126 to address these concerns and close these enormous loopholes. Please allow the full General Assembly the opportunity to debate this critical issue and to pass meaningful legislation to improve transparency and help provide our state's citizens with truly clean elections.