

Government Administration and Elections Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5518

Title: AN ACT PROTECTING THE CITIZENS' ELECTION FUND.

Vote Date: 3/23/2018

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/19/2018

File No.: 452

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration and Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would require if during an election cycle there are insufficient funds to cover grants to qualified Citizens' Election Program (CEP) candidates, proceeds from the state's sale of unclaimed or abandoned property is to be deposited into the Citizens' Election Fund (CEF). The deposit(s) must equal the insufficient funds in the CEF. The bill would also eliminate the requirement when funds are deposited in the CEF, when there are insufficient funds, an amount equal to the total deposits be deducted from the following fiscal year escheats into the CEP.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Michael J. Brandi, Executive Director & General Counsel, State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC):

SEEC supports the bill. Mr. Brandi states that the bill protects the Citizens' Election Fund (CEF) for 2018 and future election cycles. The bill streamlines the way the CEF is funded when there are insufficiencies either in the CEF or the escheats fund from which it draws its funds. THE CEP has had funds taken from it since it began in 2005 and given just enough money every time to pay for an average election. If it is a busier election, the CEP is at risk because the funds are never fully replenished. This bill removes a provision that deducts from annual deposits if the CEF is overdrawn, thereby ensuring its future solvency.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Cheri Quickmire, Executive Director, Common Cause in Connecticut:

Ms. Quickmire believes that the bill is a, “commonsense approach to insuring that there are adequate funds in the CEF to allow for grants as candidates qualify for the program”.

Jim Redman, Campaign Finance and Open Government Specialist, The League of Women Voters of Connecticut:

The League of Women Voters believes that the bill will make the necessary changes to ensure the continued funding of Citizens’ Election Program. The CEP, while not perfect, is essential for good, honest, and transparent government and the bill helps to ensure continued funding for this model program.

Tom Swan, Executive Director, CT Citizen Action Group (CCAG)

Ensuring there are adequate resources for the Citizens Election Program (CEP) is an essential part of our democracy in Connecticut.

James Root, Danbury, CT:

This modest measure to ensure full funding for the program-avoiding the direct use of tax dollars-can ensure the long term fitness of this very successful program that has distinguished CT from other states.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed.

Reported by: Steve Smith / Susan Tufts

Date: 4/13/2018