

Government Administration and Elections Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7205

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM FOR THE PUBLIC FINANCING OF MUNICIPAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER CAMPAIGNS IN CERTAIN

Title: DISTRESSED MUNICIPALITIES FOR THE 2027 MUNICIPAL ELECTION.

Vote Date:

Vote Action:

PH Date: 3/14/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration and Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

There has been a growing concern to increase government accountability and transparency. There has also been concerns over how political campaigns are funded and the ability for big money to dominate grass roots funding in the influence of candidates and campaigns. This bill would seek to establish a pilot program to test a public campaign financing program in certain distressed municipalities for the 2027 municipal chief executive officer elections. This would allow the state to study the effects and implementation of a public financing for campaigns.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Shannon Kief, Legal Program Director, State Elections Enforcement Commission:

In this turbulent legislative session, SEEC has had continuous proposals. There have been so many that require our resources that we testified that we need four additional to accomplish this. This proposal to establish a pilot program for public campaign financing in all distressed municipalities needs an increase in personal or budget. This is not feasible currently without damaging our ability to perform core functions. The next several years will be a challenge to democracy. Now is not the time to weaken one of the most successful programs for getting big money out of politics or to destroy the independence of the watchdog agency in charge of enforcing the integrity of elections.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

None Expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Jennifer Damon, Fairfield:

I oppose any public funds for this bill as written. The bill limits the amount of fundraising and expenditures and only for municipalities with populations under 25,000. The larger municipalities will not be eligible to participate. What would this bill accomplish?

Reported by: Pamela Bianca

Date: March 18, 2025