



MARK POCAN

WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Committee on Judiciary, Consumer Affairs, and Campaign Finance Reform

FROM: Representatives Mark Pocan

DATE: April 19, 2001

RE: SB 137 / AB 295 -- WI Clean Elections Fund

I am sorry that I was unable to attend the hearing in Green Bay two weeks ago and that I am also unable to attend today's hearings. However, I will be at the Madison hearing and look forward to discuss the WI Clean Elections Fund and answer any questions you may have at that time. But in the meantime, I have put together some background information on the bill and talking points about SB 137 / AB 295.

Beginning in 1996, Maine voters made history by passing the Clean Elections Act which made their state the first in the nation to provide full public financing for political campaigns. **This is currently the most sweeping campaign finance reform measure in the nation.** On November 7, 2000, 84% of Wisconsin voters checked yes for campaign finance reform on their ballots and I think it's time we followed Maine's lead.

These companion bills, the Wisconsin Clean Elections Fund, would follow the example of Maine and Arizona in implementing comprehensive campaign finance reform and create a voluntary system of 100% public financing of state elections. This would be a great step in decreasing the influence of special interests and wealthy donors in our elections. It will also allow for greater participation among ordinary citizens in the political process, and help decrease the disillusionment many people feel with their government today

The key components of the bill are as follows:

- To qualify to receive the public grants, Clean Elections candidates must collect a set number of \$5 contributions from the district in which they are running:

Governor - 2,500	(\$12,500)
State Senate - 150	(\$750)
State Assembly - 50	(\$250)

- Once qualified for the grant, clean elections candidates may not accept any contributions. Also, self contributions are limited to \$100.
- Qualified Clean Elections candidates then receive a grant for their campaign:

	Primary	General
Governor	\$500,000	\$1,000,000
State Senate	\$36,000	\$72,000
State Assembly	\$18,000	\$36,000
- Uncontested races will receive grants based on the average amount of expenditures spent by candidates in uncontested elections in the preceding 4 year period.
- Clean Elections candidates running against traditional candidates may receive matching funds to ensure fairness. As a traditional candidate spending increases past the amount of the grant, the Clean Elections candidate will receive dollar for dollar matching funds (up to 2.5 times the original grant).
- Clean Elections candidates may also receive matching funds for independent expenditures made in opposition to them or in support of their opponent.
- Clean Elections grant money that is left unspent is returned to the fund.

I look forward to testify before the committee soon, but if you have any questions prior to then, please feel free to contact me at 608/266-8570.