
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that providing public
2 funds for qualifying candidates has several benefits that
3 support democratic processes and enhance the integrity of
4 elections. Under Hawaii's partial public financing program, the
5 overall cost of elections can be controlled, discouraging
6 excessive spending that leads to campaign "arms races" and
7 mitigating financial inequality among candidates.

8 Offering public financing for elections promotes fair
9 competition by enabling candidates with limited personal wealth
10 or access to large donors to run viable campaigns. With
11 financial barriers reduced, more candidates can run for office,
12 providing voters with a broader, more diverse range of choices
13 and fostering a healthier democratic environment.

14 Public financing programs amplify the voices of everyday
15 citizens over large-scale donors by prioritizing voter
16 engagement. To receive matching contributions in Hawaii,
17 candidates are required to demonstrate that they have a base of



1 support from small-dollar donors in their constituency. This
2 requirement ensures candidates are connected to and
3 representative of their communities. It also helps reduce the
4 undue influence of special interests on policy decisions by
5 limiting or eliminating the need for candidates to rely on large
6 contributions from corporations, political action committees, or
7 wealthy individuals.

8 Candidates who receive public funds must agree to spending
9 caps and restrictions on external funding, fostering a culture
10 of ethical and issue-focused campaigning. Candidates are also
11 subject to detailed reporting and oversight requirements, which
12 increases transparency and accountability in campaign financing.
13 Voters can be more confident that candidates in the public
14 financing program run ethical campaigns without hidden agendas.

15 The legislature further finds that allocating public funds
16 or encouraging grassroots contributions is an investment in the
17 democratic system, ensuring it remains accessible and
18 representative of the people. When elections are seen as fair
19 and equitable, public trust in the democratic process increases,
20 reinforcing the legitimacy of elected officials.



1 The purpose of this Act is to promote a fairer, more
2 equitable, and more representative electoral process by
3 increasing the matching fund payments to candidates in the
4 partial public financing program for excess qualifying
5 contributions.

6 SECTION 2. Section 11-429, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
7 amended by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

8 "(b) A candidate shall obtain the minimum qualifying
9 contribution amount set forth in subsection (a) once for the
10 election period.

11 ~~[(1)]~~ If the candidate obtains the minimum qualifying
12 contribution amount, the candidate ~~[is]~~ shall be
13 eligible to receive:

14 ~~[(A)]~~ (1) The minimum payment in an amount equal to
15 the minimum qualifying contribution amounts; and

16 ~~[(B)]~~ (2) Payments of ~~[\$1]~~ \$2 for each \$1 of
17 qualifying contributions in excess of the minimum
18 qualifying contribution amounts~~;~~ and

19 ~~(2)]~~ .



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1 A candidate shall have at least one other qualified
2 candidate as an opponent for the primary or general election to
3 receive public funds for that election."

4 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
5 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

6 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

7

INTRODUCED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. J. Ryan", is written over a horizontal line.

JAN 26 2026



H.B. NO. 2228

Report Title:

Elections; Partial Public Financing; Matching Funds

Description:

Increases the matching fund payments to candidates in the partial public financing program for excess qualifying contributions.

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