



The League of Women Voters of Portland

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Campaign Finance Funds for City Auditor Special Election City Council Testimony January 22, 2009

The League strongly supports Voter-Owned Elections, and we encourage you to continue your support of Portland's system of public campaign finance. With a special election for the position of auditor you are again considering modifications to the basic program to fit this specific circumstance.

We support the Citizen Campaign Commission's proposal and appreciate Commissioner Fritz's contributions to its development. While we understand the reasons to reduce the amount of initial funding for candidates in this special election, it is important to leave in place the matching funds option.

As the Citizen Campaign Commission continues its ongoing work on recommendations for permanent rules for special elections, we trust that the members will keep in mind the very important role our auditor fills and how that role has changed in recent years. In addition to holding city bureaus accountable for their performance, the office now oversees the Campaign Finance Fund, the Independent Police Review Division, Lobbying Regulation, and the Ombudsman's office. The new responsibilities and powers have the potential to attract more candidates and could lead to more competitive races. The position may be less visible than the commissioners', but it also is elected citywide and of equal importance. For these reasons, full funding should be a priority in terms of the initial allocation and matching support.

Portland has been a leader in establishing Voter-Owned Elections for elective office. We urge you to continue to show your commitment to this groundbreaking program by ensuring adequate funding for special elections when the Citizen Campaign Commission submits its recommendations for permanent rules.

The League would like to thank the Citizen Campaign Commission for the work its members continue to do and to thank the City Council for actively supporting campaign finance reform.

The League agrees with those of you who stressed the importance of educating the public about the auditor's race and we are committed to organizing a candidate forum if the race is contested.

Thank you for your time today.

"To promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government."