

What Are Voter-Owned Elections?

A powerful tool for protecting our democracy:



The high cost of running for office in NC has risen fivefold over the last 15 years, giving wealthy campaign donors influence over elections and policy:

It now costs \$150,000 to win an NC Senate seat — and even more for Council of State offices.



This high cost is preventing many of our best public servants from running for office.



Candidates who do run must depend on wealthy donors and political action committees to win.



All too often, these big donors receive special treatment and influence public policy in return.



Some receive special tax breaks that rob our state of millions in needed revenue each year.



Others influence policy and regulations — costing NC consumers millions each year.

The result: NC voters are being shut out of their own government

There is a solution:

Voter-Owned Elections

Voter-Owned Elections (VOE) are a proven and “clean” way to finance campaigns. They give power back to the voters of NC and reduce the influence of wealthy special interests. Candidates receive a competitive amount of public campaign financing — but only if they meet strict public-trust conditions. Best of all, Voter-Owned Elections are already working in cities and states across the U.S.

Voter-Owned Elections are NOT give-away programs:

- ♦ To receive public campaign financing, a candidate must first show broad public support by obtaining hundreds of small donations from registered voters: NC voters decide if a candidate is worthy of public funds.
- ♦ Candidates must also agree to strict fundraising and spending limits, including limits on how much PAC money they accept.

VOE strengthens democracy by...

- ♦ Restoring voters to their rightful role in our government and giving them back the power to decide elections and help shape policy.
- ♦ Opening doors for more candidates to run for office — giving voters more choice.
- ♦ Forcing candidates and elected officials to be accountable to the voters of NC, not big donors.
- ♦ Putting voter-driven issues at the forefront of the campaign and policy debate.
- ♦ Eliminating tax breaks for big donors while ensuring government policies benefit the public interest instead of special interests.

VOE has proved successful in NC

North Carolina is already a national leader in VOE — proof that NC voters want their government back.

- ♦ A majority of the judges now on the NC Supreme Court and Court of Appeals used public financing when they were elected.
- ♦ In 2008, a new VOE program for three NC Council of State offices allowed both Democrats and Republicans to reject money from donors connected to their agencies.
- ♦ VOE is endorsed by hundreds of civic leaders and millions of NC voters like yourself who check YES to funding the N.C. Public Campaign Fund on their income tax returns each year.

For fact sheets on money in NC politics and info on how you can support Voter-Owned Elections, contact:

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Call us at: (888) OUR-VOTE or (919) 286-6000. Visit us at: www.democracy-nc.org.

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