

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HJR 989 Repeal of Public Campaign Financing Requirement
SPONSOR(S): White
TIED BILLS: HB 991 **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:**

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Oversight, Transparency & Administration Subcommittee	14 Y, 0 N	Toliver	Harrington
2) Public Integrity & Ethics Committee			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

In 1998, the Florida electorate approved an amendment to the Florida Constitution requiring the establishment of a method of public financing for campaigns for statewide office. The amendment was incorporated into the Florida Constitution as article VI, s. 7, the public campaign financing amendment. The amendment requires the Legislature to establish in law a method of public financing for campaigns for statewide office. The amendment further requires spending limits be created for any candidate who chooses to use the public financing option

The joint resolution proposes an amendment to the Florida Constitution that repeals the public campaign financing amendment. If passed, the joint resolution will be considered by the electorate at the next general election on November 6, 2018.

The joint resolution, if passed in conjunction with HB 991, which is linked to this resolution, will likely have a positive fiscal impact on the state. See Fiscal Comments.

Article XI, s. 1 of the Florida Constitution requires a three-fifths vote of the members present and voting for final passage of a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Florida Constitution. This joint resolution proposes a constitutional amendment, thus it requires a three-fifths vote for final passage.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Background

Public Campaign Financing Amendment

In 1998, the Constitutional Revision Commission,¹ a body which meets every 20 years to consider amendments to the Florida Constitution, placed an amendment on the general election ballot requiring the establishment of a method of public financing for candidates for state-wide office.² The proposed amendment garnered 64.1 percent of the vote, meeting the 60 percent threshold necessary for it to become a part of the Florida Constitution.³ The amendment provides that “[i]t is the policy of this state to provide for state-wide election in which all qualified candidates may compete effectively.”⁴ The amendment requires the Legislature to establish in law a method of public financing for campaigns for statewide office.⁵ The amendment further requires spending limits be created for any candidate who chooses to use the public financing option.⁶

The Florida Election Campaign Financing Act

In 1986,⁷ the Legislature, concerned that the costs of running a campaign for statewide office limited the persons who would run to only those who were independently wealthy or those supported by special interests,⁸ created the Florida Election Campaign Financing Act (the Act).⁹ The Act created a framework for the public financing of statewide campaigns, setting eligibility requirements, expenditure limitations for participating candidates, and establishing a supporting trust fund.

Only candidates for the offices of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, or the Cabinet are eligible for funding.¹⁰ A candidate for one of those offices seeking to receive public funding under the Act must:

- File a request with the Division of Elections (division) upon qualifying for office;¹¹
- Agree to abide by the Act’s expenditure limits;¹²
- Raise a certain amount of contributions;¹³
- Limit loans or contributions from the candidate’s personal funds to \$25,000 and contributions from national, state, and county executive committees of a political party to \$250,000 in the aggregate;¹⁴ and
- Submit to a postelection audit of the campaign account by the division.¹⁵

Gubernatorial candidates and candidates for cabinet member must limit their expenditures: \$2.00 for each Florida-registered voter for Governor and Lieutenant Governor or \$1.00 for each Florida-

¹ Article XI, s. 2, Fla. Const.

² Revision 11, CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION COMMISSION 1998, available at <http://fall.fsulawrc.com/crc/ballot.html> (last visited January 9, 2018).

³ 1998 Election Results, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, available at

<https://results.elections.myflorida.com/?ElectionDate=11/3/1998&DATAMODE=> (last visited January 9, 1998).

⁴ Article VI, s. 7, Fla. Const.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Chapter 86-276, L.O.F. (1986).

⁸ Section 106.31, F.S.

⁹ Section 106.30, F.S., states that sections 106.30-106.36 may be cited as the “Florida Election Campaign Financing Act.”

¹⁰ Section 106.33, F.S.

¹¹ *Id.*; see also Fla. Admin. R. 1S-2.047.

¹² Section 106.33(1), F.S.; see also s. 106.34, F.S.

¹³ Section 106.33(2), F.S. A candidate for Governor must raise at least \$150,000 and a candidate for a cabinet office must raise at least \$100,000.

¹⁴ Section 106.33(3), F.S.

¹⁵ Section 106.33(4), F.S.

registered voter for cabinet officer.¹⁶ However, if a candidate who is not receiving public campaign funds exceeds the expenditure limitations set forth in the Act, then a participating candidate is released from abiding by the expenditure limits.¹⁷

The division reviews each request for public contributions and certifies whether the candidate is eligible before distribution.¹⁸ If certified, the candidate receives qualifying matching contributions¹⁹ on a two-to-one basis for contributions making up the amount of funds needed to initially become eligible for public financing and on a one-to-one basis thereafter.²⁰

A participating candidate who exceeds the expenditure limit or falsely reports qualifying matching contributions and thereby receives contributions to which the candidate was not entitled shall be fined an amount equal to three times the amount at issue.²¹

Effect of the Joint Resolution

The joint resolution repeals article VI, s. 7, of the Florida Constitution, the public campaign financing amendment.

The joint resolution must pass each chamber with a three-fifths vote before it may be placed on the ballot. Thereafter, it must be approved by 60 percent of the electors voting. If approved, the amendment will take effect January 8, 2019.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Not applicable.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

See Fiscal Comments.

2. Expenditures:

See Fiscal Comments.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

¹⁶ Section 106.34(1), F.S.

¹⁷ Section 106.355, F.S.

¹⁸ Section 106.35(1), F.S.

¹⁹ Section 106.35(2)(b), F.S., defines “qualifying matching contributions” to mean contributions of \$250 or less from an individual, made after September 1 of the calendar year prior to the election.

²⁰ Section 106.35(2), F.S.

²¹ Section 106.36, F.S.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

Article XI, s. 5(d) of the Florida Constitution requires publication of a proposed amendment in a newspaper of general circulation in each county. The division is required to advertise the full text of a proposed constitutional amendment twice in a newspaper of general circulation in each county before the election. The division is also required to provide each supervisor of elections with either booklets or posters displaying the full text of a proposed amendment.²²

If passed in conjunction with HB 991, which is linked to this resolution, the resolution will likely have a positive fiscal impact on the state. Elimination of the public campaign financing amendment and the public financing campaign act in chapter 106, F.S., would allow the funds currently expended for those purposes to be diverted elsewhere. The Department of State asserts that \$4,336,040.04 was spent on the public financing of campaigns in 2014²³ and \$6,065,556.11 in 2010.²⁴

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

None.

²² Section 101.171, F.S.

²³ Public Campaign Finance 2014, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, available at <http://dos.myflorida.com/elections/candidates-committees/campaign-finance/public-campaign-finance-2014/> (last visited 1/11/18).

²⁴ Public Campaign Finance 2010, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, available at <http://dos.myflorida.com/elections/candidates-committees/campaign-finance/public-campaign-finance-2010/> (last visited 1/11/18).