

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 615 Campaign Finance
SPONSOR(S): Roth
TIED BILLS: HJR 613 **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 272

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Oversight, Transparency & Public Management Subcommittee	7 Y, 5 N	Toliver	Harrington
2) Public Integrity & Ethics Committee	10 Y, 6 N	Rubottom	Rubottom
3) State Affairs Committee	12 Y, 7 N	Toliver	Williamson

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

In 1986, the Legislature created the Florida Election Campaign Financing Act (Act) for the public financing of statewide candidates. The Act created a framework for the public financing of statewide campaigns, set eligibility requirements and expenditure limitations for participating candidates, established a supporting trust fund, and created a distribution formula for public contributions to candidates. Only candidates for the offices of Governor (Governor and Lieutenant Governor candidates are considered a 'single' candidate for public financing purposes) or the Cabinet are eligible for funding under the Act.

In 1998, the Florida electorate approved amendment 10 to the Florida Constitution that required the establishment of a method of public financing for campaigns for statewide office. The amendment was incorporated in the Florida Constitution as art. VI, s. 7.

The bill repeals the Act in its entirety along with any references thereto. The bill is linked to HJR 613 (2019) and will only become law if that resolution passes the Legislature, is approved by the electorate, and becomes an amendment to the Florida Constitution.

The bill, if passed in conjunction with HJR 613, will likely have a positive fiscal impact on the state. See Fiscal Comments.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Background

The Florida Election Campaign Financing Act

In 1986,¹ 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,² created the Florida Election Campaign Financing Act (the Act).³ The Act created a framework for the public financing of statewide campaigns, set eligibility requirements and expenditure limitations for participating candidates, and established a supporting trust fund.

Only candidates for the offices of Governor (Governor and Lieutenant Governor candidates are considered a 'single' candidate for public financing purposes) or the Cabinet are eligible for funding.⁴ 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) within the Department of State upon qualifying for office;⁵
- Agree to abide by the Act's expenditure limits;⁶
- Raise a certain amount of contributions;⁷
- 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;⁸ and
- Submit to a postelection audit of the campaign account by the division.⁹

Gubernatorial candidates and candidates for cabinet member must limit their expenditures¹⁰ according to the following schedule: \$2.00 for each Florida-registered voter¹¹ for Governor and Lieutenant Governor or \$1.00 for each Florida-registered voter for Cabinet Officer. The expenditure limits for the 2018 election cycle were as follows:

- Governor and Lieutenant Governor: \$27,091,462.00 (\$2.00 for each Florida-registered voter); and
- Cabinet Officer: \$13,545,731.00 (\$1.00 for each Florida-registered voter).¹²

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.¹³ The division reviews each request for public contributions and certifies whether the candidate is eligible

¹ Chapter 86-276, L.O.F.

² Section 106.31, F.S.

³ Section 106.30, F.S., states that ss. 106.30-106.36, F.S., may be cited as the "Florida Election Campaign Financing Act."

⁴ Section 106.33, F.S.

⁵ *Id.*; see also Fla. Admin. R. 1S-2.047.

⁶ Section 106.33(1), F.S.; see also s. 106.34, F.S.

⁷ 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.

⁸ Section 106.33(3), F.S.

⁹ Section 106.33(4), F.S.

¹⁰ See s. 106.011(10)(a), F.S.

¹¹ The Florida Election Campaign Financing Act defines the term "Florida-registered voter" to mean a voter who is registered to vote in Florida as of June 30 of each odd-numbered year. The Division is required to certify the total number of Florida-registered voters no later than July 31 of each odd-numbered year. Section 106.34(3), F.S.

¹² 2018 Public Campaign Financing Handbook, Department of State, available at <https://dos.myflorida.com/media/698987/public-campaign-financing-2018.pdf> (last visited 3/5/19).

¹³ Section 106.355, F.S.

before distribution.¹⁴ If certified, the candidate receives qualifying matching contributions 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.¹⁵ The one-to-one match only applies to contributions of \$250 or less per individual; any amount contributed by an individual in excess of \$250 will only be matched up to \$250.¹⁶ Additionally, for the match to occur, the individual from whom the contributions are received must be a resident of the state.¹⁷ The funds are distributed from the general revenue fund. Total distributions for the 2010, 2014, and 2018 election cycles were as follows:

2010 Election Cycle – Total Distributions¹⁸	
Office	Distribution
Governor (Lt. Gov.)	\$1,816,014.47
Chief Financial Officer	\$1,204,321.09
Attorney General	\$2,176,956.17
Commissioner of Agriculture	\$868,264.38
TOTAL	\$6,065,556.11

2014 Election Cycle – Total Distributions¹⁹	
Office	Distribution
Governor (Lt. Gov.)	\$2,830,194.03
Chief Financial Officer	\$418,396.06
Attorney General	\$628,440.64
Commissioner of Agriculture	\$459,009.31
TOTAL	\$4,336,040.04

2018 Election Cycle – Total Distributions²⁰	
Office	Distribution
Governor (Lt. Gov.)	\$8,151,124.58
Chief Financial Officer	\$334,604.00
Attorney General	\$933,187.02
Commissioner of Agriculture	\$433,690.16
TOTAL	\$9,852,605.76

The purpose of Florida’s public campaign financing program is that all qualified candidates “may compete effectively.”²¹ This purpose has been questioned by at least one court.²²

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 is fined an amount equal to three times the amount at issue.²³

¹⁴ Section 106.35(1), F.S.

¹⁵ Section 106.35(2)(a), F.S.

¹⁶ Section 106.35(2)(b), F.S.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ Public Campaign Finance 2010, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, available at <http://dos.myflorida.com/elections/candidates-committees/campaign-finance/public-campaign-finance-2010/> (last visited 3/5/19).

¹⁹ Public Campaign Finance 2014, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, available at <http://dos.myflorida.com/elections/candidates-committees/campaign-finance/public-campaign-finance-2014/> (last visited 3/5/19).

²⁰ Public Campaign Finance 2018, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, available at <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/candidates-committees/campaign-finance/public-campaign-finance-2018/> (last visited 3/5/19).

²¹ Article VI, s. 7, FLA. CONST.

²² *Scott v. Roberts*, 612 F.3d 1279, 1293 (11th Cir. 2010) (“the system levels the electoral playing field, and that purpose is constitutionally problematic”).

²³ Section 106.36, F.S.

Public Campaign Financing Amendment

In 1998, the Constitution Revision Commission,²⁴ a body that 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 statewide office.²⁵ The proposed amendment was approved by the electorate, garnering 64.1 percent of the vote.²⁶ The constitutional provision is presently found in art. VI, s. 7 and provides that “[i]t is the policy of this state to provide for state-wide elections in which all qualified candidates may compete effectively.”²⁷ The provision requires the Legislature to establish in law a method of public financing for campaigns for statewide office.²⁸ The provision further requires spending limits be created for any candidate who chooses to use the public financing option.²⁹ In 2009, the Legislature passed HJR 81 (2009), which proposed a constitutional amendment to repeal the public campaign financing amendment. The proposed amendment was placed on the ballot at the 2010 general election. The amendment failed to pass the required 60 percent threshold, garnering 52.5 percent of the vote, and therefore was not incorporated into the Florida Constitution.³⁰

HJR 613 (2019)

HJR 613 repeals art. VI, s. 7. of the Florida Constitution, the public campaign financing amendment. If the joint resolution passes each chamber with a three-fifths vote it will be placed on the general election ballot in 2020. If the electorate approves the amendment with at least 60 percent of electors voting in favor of its passage,³¹ it will repeal the public financing amendment.

Effect of the Bill

The bill repeals the Florida Election Campaign Financing Act in its entirety along with any references thereto. The bill is linked to HJR 613 (2019) and will only become law if that resolution passes the Legislature, is approved by the electorate, and becomes an amendment to the Florida Constitution.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1 repeals ss. 106.30, 106.31, 106.32, 106.33, 106.34, 106.35, 106.353, 106.355, and 106.36, F.S., relating to the Florida Election Campaign Financing Act.

Section 2 amends s. 106.021, F.S., relating to campaign treasurers and depositories.

Section 3 amends s. 106.141, F.S., relating to the disposition of surplus funds by candidates.

Section 4 amends s. 106.22, F.S., relating to duties of the division.

Section 5 amends s. 328.72, F.S., relating to vessel classification and registration.

Section 6 amends s. 607.1622, F.S., relating to annual reports due to the Department of State.

Section 7 provides an effective date that is contingent upon the passage of HJR 613 and its approval by the voters.

²⁴ Article XI, s. 2, FLA. CONST.

²⁵ Revision 11, CONSTITUTION REVISION COMMISSION 1998, available at <http://fall.fsulawrc.com/crc/ballot.html> (last visited 3/5/19).

²⁶ 1998 Election Results, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, available at <https://results.elections.myflorida.com/?ElectionDate=11/3/1998&DATAMODE=> (last visited 3/5/19).

²⁷ Article VI, s. 7, FLA. CONST.

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ 2010 Election Results, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, available at <https://results.elections.myflorida.com/Index.asp?ElectionDate=11/2/2010&DATAMODE=> (last visited March 13, 2019).

³¹ Article XI, s. 5, FLA. CONST.

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.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

The bill, if passed in conjunction with HJR 613 (2019), with which it is linked, will likely have a positive fiscal impact on the state. Elimination of the public campaign financing amendment and the act will allow the funds currently expended for those purposes to be diverted elsewhere. The Department of State asserts that \$9,852,605.76 was spent on the public financing of campaigns in 2018,³² \$4,336,040.04 in 2014³³ and \$6,065,556.11 in 2010.³⁴ As the original trust fund for the public campaign financing program expired in 1996,³⁵ these funds are currently distributed from general revenue.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

The bill appears to be exempt from the requirements of art. VII, s. 18 of the Florida Constitution because it is an election law.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

³² Public Campaign Finance 2018, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, available at <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/candidates-committees/campaign-finance/public-campaign-finance-2018/> (last visited 3/5/19).

³³ Public Campaign Finance 2014, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, available at <http://dos.myflorida.com/elections/candidates-committees/campaign-finance/public-campaign-finance-2014/> (last visited 3/5/19).

³⁴ Public Campaign Finance 2010, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, available at <http://dos.myflorida.com/elections/candidates-committees/campaign-finance/public-campaign-finance-2010/> (last visited 3/5/19).

³⁵ The trust fund expired, effective November 4, 1996, by operation of s. 19(f), art. III of the State Constitution. *See* s. 106.32, F.S.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

None.