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Chairman, Election Law Committee
New Hampshire House of Representative
State House Annex, Room
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: House Bill 1773

Dear Chairman Griffin and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 1773. Some years ago, I had the opportunity to chair a legislatively-created commission on campaign finance reform, which studied the issue and various mechanisms for payment for and increasing involvement in elections in New Hampshire. I also serve as chair of the state Ballot Law Commission, but that assignment is separate and distinct from issues of financing.

While House Bill 1773 is not strictly a campaign financing reform bill, I believe the process contained in it, while modest in scope, would be a good first step in providing individuals the means to support candidates and an opportunity for those candidates participating to recognize the limitations of the present system and the attractiveness of alternative.

HB 1773 establishes a clean elections fund that will be created through voluntary donations, fines levied for violations of election laws, interest generated by the fund, and any state appropriations.

The fund will be used to provide citizen financing for the primary and general election campaigns of gubernatorial, executive council, and state senate candidates that agree to limit their acceptance of private contributions. Gubernatorial candidates would limit their acceptance of private contributions from individuals to \$500 per contributor, executive council candidates to \$250 per contributor, and state senate candidates to \$200 per contributor.

It also establishes a clean elections board and a clean elections enforcement unit to administer the fund and enforce campaign finance laws. If you deem it appropriate, this assignment might be assigned to the Ballot Law Commission, to avoid duplication of boards, although this suggestion might require more consideration of what workload that would add to the Commission.

On the first business day in every election year, the board would mail 4 certificates worth \$25 each to every person registered to vote in the State of New Hampshire. Thereafter, the board

would mail the 4 \$25 certificates to persons who register to vote before October 1 of the general election year. Registered voters could assign their certificates and send to candidates that have agreed to limit their acceptance of contributions. These candidates would then be able to redeem the certificates with funds from the clean elections fund.

The monetary threshold limits in the bill would be adjusted annually to reflect inflation.

The bill also strengthens the law to ensure the independence of SuperPACs and candidates' campaigns, which are suggestions worth of consideration.

I urge you to act favorably on this bill, both as a worthy proposal, but also as a means to keep the conversation alive about public financing vehicles and the need to do something about the out-of-control present system and the effects of too much money in politics.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bradford E. Cook