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RE: HB1773

Before: House Election Law Committee

Chairperson Griffin and Members of the Committee,

Please consider this letter my testimony in support of HB1773 establishing a fund to provide campaign financing for eligible candidates for governor, councilor, and state senator. I am out of state on your January 16, 2018 hearing date, otherwise would testify in person.

My lengthy and varied experience in New Hampshire election campaigns has convinced me of the need for a public election financing system as a voluntary alternative for candidates. I have served in the past as R state senator, chair of the GOP platform committee, chair of the year 2000 GOP redistricting committee, spokesman and senior policy advisor for candidate for Governor Gordon Humphrey, and candidate for governor and US Senator. I have also served on two election finance panels which have proposed public election finance legislation. In my US Senate campaigns, I proposed voter tax rebates as a means to provide public finance mechanism for Congressional elections.

The present purely-private elections finance system seriously restricts participation by otherwise viable candidates for governor, councilor and state senate and narrows the range of debate and policy proposals during campaigns. The result is fewer choices for voters among candidates and slower progress in solving public policy challenges. Additionally, the current purely-private system tilts influence away from voters and toward those with money to spend on campaigns.

As to HB1773, I recognize the historic difficulty in budgeting general fund monies for public elections financing. In the absence of a complete cost projection in the fiscal note accompanying this bill, I encourage the committee to consult widely to complete this task.

Should this committee not see fit to recommend OTP as a result of general fund budget concerns, I strongly urge members to craft an alternatively-funded version of this bill for recommended passage. I and other public elections finance supporters are ready to help with specific ideas.

Thank you for your service and your consideration of these thoughts.



Jim Rubens