

Americans for Campaign Reform - Brennan Center for Justice - Campaign Legal Center
Common Cause - CREW - Democracy 21 - People For the American Way
League of Women Voters- Public Campaign - Public Citizen - U.S. PIRG

Reform Groups Urge You to Vote No on H.R. 3463 This Week

November 30, 2011

Dear Representative,

Our organizations strongly urge you to oppose H.R. 3463, legislation introduced by Representative Gregg Harper (R-Miss.) to repeal the presidential public financing system and terminate the Election Assistance Commission. The legislation is expected to be considered by the House on Thursday.

Our organizations include: Americans for Campaign Reform, Brennan Center for Justice, Campaign Legal Center, Common Cause, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), Democracy 21, League of Women Voters, People For the American Way, Public Campaign, Public Citizen, and U.S. PIRG.

Dangerous campaign finance developments in the 2012 presidential campaign show just how essential it is to repair, not repeal, the presidential public financing system. In the aftermath of the destructive *Citizens United* decision, the financing of the 2012 presidential election is being dominated by bundlers, big donors, Super PACs, candidate-specific Super PACs, secret contributions and the like. This is the kind of campaign money that leads to scandal and corruption.

The presidential public financing system worked well for the nation for most of its existence, providing presidential candidates with the funds needed to mount viable candidacies without becoming indebted to special-interest influence money. The system became outmoded in recent years as a result of Congress failing to take any action to update the system and to respond to the increased costs of running a presidential campaign.

A 2008 *USA TODAY/Gallup* poll on the eve of the 2008 presidential election found that more than 70 percent of the American public supported the continuation of the presidential public financing system, and only 19 percent favored eliminating it.

Presidential candidates are entitled to have the option of running for President on a system based on small donations and public funds as an alternative to becoming obligated to influence-seeking funders. This alternative system is the same one that President Ronald Reagan voluntarily participated in three times, including his two successful runs for President and President Bill Clinton voluntarily used twice to successfully win the presidency. Every president elected from 1976 to 2004 has made use of the presidential public financing system.

H.R. 414, introduced this year by Representatives David Price (R-NC) and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) would repair the presidential public financing system to take account of the increased costs

of running a presidential campaign and to increase the incentives for small donors to contribute to presidential candidates.

We strongly urge House members to reject the effort to repeal the presidential public financing system and to co-sponsor H.R. 414, the Price-Van Hollen bill to repair the system.

H.R. 3463 also seeks to terminate the Election Assistance Commission and transfer some of its functions to the Federal Election Commission, a dysfunctional agency. We strongly urge you to reject this effort.

Congress should strengthen, not terminate, the EAC and ensure that the agency can perform its critical functions in data collection, research, and information sharing among elected officials at every level, the public and concerned organizations. Congress should ensure that the EAC has sufficient authority to carry out these responsibilities.

It makes no sense, furthermore, to transfer EAC functions to the FEC, which is widely recognized as an ineffectual and discredited agency. There is no basis for providing an agency that is paralyzed and incapable of carrying out its own responsibilities with a new area of additional responsibilities.

The presidential public financing system should be repaired, not repealed. The Election Administration Commission should be strengthened, not terminated.

We strongly urge you to vote no on H.R. 3463.

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