

IDEAS FOR PUBLIC FUNDING OF ELECTIONS

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Submitted by Barbara Hilton – unedited list of suggestions presented by various sources

1. There are several ideas out there that tie public financing to the public good of sustainable living. One of these is the idea that plastic bags are a scourge on the earth and that a surcharge on the use of plastic bags somewhere along the chain either at manufacture, import, wholesale or retail levels might be beneficial to our effort, our cities, states, oceans and the planet. Just google “sea of plastic” to understand what this effort is about. And here is a link to understand what might be done: <http://www.rockymountainnews.com/news/2008/feb/08/10-cents-a-bag-surcharge-suggested/>
2. A special program in which the State sold bonds for a limited time particularly earmarked to fund public funding of elections.
3. A surcharge on hard liquor.
4. Ask individuals to donate to a general fund that would be for all candidates, not a specific party.
5. Change the process by raising awareness. As people learn what ‘public funding’ means, communities, citizens and officials come to understand that a do-nothing course of action in the face of larger campaign financing trends is neither a feasible life choice nor an acceptable municipal course of action. This realization gives rise to the political will to change.
6. Equal free media time given to all candidates based on the idea that the airwaves supposedly belong to the people.
7. Surcharge on candy.
8. Lottery tickets for clean elections
9. Clean vote license plates
10. Fund through laws mandating producer responsibility of certain solid wastes—such as packaging, newspapers, cars, car tires, batteries, electric and electronic products, etc. Producers would be responsible for recycling their products or have to pay a surcharge to the state that could be used to fund public financing of elections.
11. Surcharge on waste dumped at landfills to reduce toxicity in our environment.
12. Voluntary check-off
13. Surcharge on sale of boats over a certain size
14. Surcharge on golf
15. Surcharge on restaurant bills over a set amount, say \$150.00
16. Surcharge on driver’s license renewals
17. Add \$6 to car registrations
18. Swap one cost for another: ie have the parties pay for the primary elections so that state-spent money would be freed up to use for public financing.
19. Take a % of transfer station income from recycling
20. Have a grocery-store donation-at-the-register campaign every year.
21. School board members get paid. What if towns/counties proceed to pay their legislators? The money freed up from that could help finance public funding.

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From a variety of sources, including Center for Governmental Studies, Public Financing of Elections: Where to Get the Money. I have deleted those which are a form of general fund sources (i.e. tax rebates, etc.).

Income tax
Criminal and Civil Fines
Punitive Damage Surcharges and Proportional Awards
Elimination of Tax Credits, Deductions or Exemption
Corporate Tax Surcharges
New or Increased Sales Taxes on Discretionary Items
Sales Taxes on Advertising
Tax on Candidate Consultant Income
Mineral Severance Taxes
Fees or Surcharges on Bids for State Contracts
Fees or Surcharges on Regulated Industries
Tax Amnesty Programs
Public Campaign Finance Bonds
Slot Machine Taxes
Refundable Deposits on Containers
New or Enhanced State Lottery Revenues
“Jock” taxes
Sales of Surplus Property
Voluntary Designations
Extensions of Temporary Taxes
“Democracy Endowment”
“Patriot Credit Card” and Campaign Vouchers
Larger Campaign Contributions with a Percentage of the Increase for Public Financing
General Fund Appropriations
Candidate PF Elections Qualifying Contributions
Penalties for Public Campaign Finance Law Violations
Unspent candidate seed and qualifying monies
Candidate late report filing fines
Earnings from fund balance
Voluntary contributions
Incremental contributions on many state tax/fee forms
Election sponsorships – naming rights via auction
Lobbyist registration fees
Special voluntary license plate fee
No lapse on unspent funds
Tax on advertising income
Fee for posting political signs on state property
Restoration of NH Legacy and Succession Tax
Increase of state car rental tax (NH currently is 8% - tied to Rooms and Meals tax)