



**Supplemental Material
Received at the Meetings of
City Council
Redevelopment Agency
Housing Authority**

**for
February 20, 2007**

Item 22: Campaign Finance

- a. Letter from JoAnn Fuller, Associate Director of Common Cause, presented to the Council regarding the organizations position regarding campaign finance and reform.

2/20/07



February 20, 2007

RE: Ordinance Amendment: Campaign Finance

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council,

Common Cause members supported the public campaign financing and contribution limits ordinances passed by our city council. At the time we recommended that an oversight commission be set up to ensure accountability in auditing expenditures from this fund and to make suggestions to improve the ordinances.

We absolutely agree that candidates who accept public financing should be held accountable for the public funds they spend. We also agree that funds transferred from one campaign account to another should disclose the donors and comply with contribution limits. However, we recognize that there is a potential conflict of interest for incumbent council members to pass legislation which would make it more difficult for potential opponents to run viable campaigns using public financing. For this reason, we support the creation of an independent ethics commission to address this issue and other similar issues related to campaigns.

An independent ethics commission could administer the public financing program and give advisory opinions on campaign finance, ethics and lobbying laws. With investigative and enforcement power, such a commission could investigate complaints, audit committees, subpoena witnesses and documents, and impose civil, criminal (perhaps limited to misdemeanors) and administrative fines. A commission could collect campaign finance and conflict of interest reports. In addition, a commission could educate candidates and the public about this program.

In terms of the amendments before you, we wonder why all candidates shouldn't live by the rules being suggested today. For example, one amendment requires publicly financed candidates to abide by the city's Fair Campaign Practices Code while other candidates are exempt from following the code. Why shouldn't all candidates be required to follow the code? And why shouldn't this code have an enforcement mechanism to ensure accountability?

Thank you for this opportunity to share our views,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JoAnn Fuller".

JoAnn Fuller
Associate Director