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historically dominated campaign fundraising.

For further cost comparison, one city commissioner testifying in support of Voter-Owned Elections in 2005 said, "on the funding issue ... forgoing just one unnecessary tax abatement could more than pay for the costs (of Voter-Owned Elections)."

I.B.: *What is the measure of success for this kind of policy?*

C.C.: The success of Voter-Owned Elections can be measured against the growing influence of money in politics prior to its adoption. For example, during the last pre-reform election in 2004, 69 percent of the money raised by city candidates came in checks of \$1,000 or more, an amount far higher than what any regular Portland family could afford. That entry fee to genuine participation in city campaigns contrasts starkly to the affordable \$5 qualifying contribution that gives everyday Portlanders throughout the city a chance to compete with downtown lobbyists and political insiders who dominated past private money fundraising.

Because of Voter-Owned Elections there hasn't been a repeat of the record \$1 million a 2004 mayoral candidate spent on his campaign. Spending on council races also has decreased. The 2008 council open seat primary included six candidates. They provided voters with a robust discussion of the issues with less overall spending than did the comparable pre-reform 2004 open seat race with only two viable candidates.

Because of Voter-Owned Elections we've seen incumbents turn their back on past major donors and cap the size of campaign contributions to \$500 or less, even when they don't participate in the reform program. The potential for special interests to promote their views in City Hall is reduced by the dramatically smaller campaign contributions since 2004 due to Voter-Owned Elections.

I.B.: *How can the current Voter Owned Election systems be improved? What's going right, what's wrong?*

C.C.: The Voter-Owned Elections program, also called the Campaign Finance Fund, has a built-in mechanism for continual evaluation and program improvements with a focus on adding safeguards to an already strict program. A hard-working group of volunteers serve on the Citizens Campaign Commission. This group monitors program implementation and has released reports with suggestions for improvements after each election since Voter-Owned Elections was enacted. We

thank them for their hard work and thank the City Council for adopting their recommendations including, but not limited to, how best to address independent expenditures, special election procedures, and, increased rigor in qualifying procedures.

Any law requires review and updates and the City Council is to be commended for forming the Citizens Campaign Commission to ensure ongoing improvements are made in the Voter-Owned Elections Program.

I.B.: *Should there be a cap put on how much candidates can spend if they accept public money for their elections?*

C.C.: A cap on spending is already a critical element of Voter-Owned Elections and a condition of accepting public funds. Once candidates

meet rigorous qualifying requirements, they agree not to accept any private money contributions so that as candidates they can focus on talking with voters and community concerns, instead of spending their time chasing after deep-pocketed campaign donors. Candidates also must comply with spending regulations and report campaign expenditures more frequently than is currently required under state law. We thank the city auditor and elections officer for their vigilant oversight that ensures compliance with all reform program rules.

I.B.: *How should Portlanders vote this coming November on Voter Owned Elections, and why?*

C.C.: Vote "yes" for Voter-Owned Elections, Portland's campaign finance fund.

All of Portland benefits because Voter-Owned Elections has reduced campaign spending, increased dialogue on community issues during campaigns, and enabled genuine participation by everyday Portlanders in selecting their City Hall representatives. Candidates can say "no" to big donors and address city concerns without even the potential for, or appearance of special interest influence.

We trust Portlanders to see through the self interest of Voter-Owned Elections opponents who want to return to the days when their major campaign contributions enabled them to put pressure on the City Council.

Untitled

by Norm Santana

Felt kinda sorry
For the dude
Even though it
Was amusing in
It's own way
He was screaming and
Kicking this parking meter
As if it were a guy
Who stole his coat
Or something
He said:
"You don't get it man
This bitch owes me"
He screamed as I
Turned around and
Walked away:
"Hundreds! Thousands
Of dollars! Years! Years
Of paying these things!
All I need is eighty cents!
And I want it now!"
He was still screaming when I turned the corner

Friendship

by Sandra (Sandy) Brooks

Friendship is like a rainbow
It is bright and full of color.
There is no end in sight
When you're with friends.
Friends will always be there
To help.
It may not be the advice
They give,
But it is the support given
That really counts.
Money doesn't make a
Person rich.
What makes a person
Richer or poorer are the
Kind of people they call
Friends.
And with the friends
I have I think that I
Am very rich indeed.

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