



SUMMARY OF FAIR ELECTIONS NOW ACT

PROBLEM:

Instead of focusing on governing, members of Congress spend too much time raising money, often from the industries they oversee and special interests with narrow agendas. Donors feel pressured to give and voters are suspicious of “pay to play” politics. The rising cost of campaigns is unsustainable. Successful candidates will have to spend more and more time focused on raising money.

SOLUTION:

The Fair Elections Now Act ends the money chase and lets our leaders do what we elected them to do – focus on our nation’s problems. Sens. Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Arlen Specter (D-PA) introduced the Act as S-752. Reps. John Larson (D-CT) and Walter Jones (R-NC) introduced it as HR-1826.

Details: The Fair Elections Now Act (FENA) gives Congressional candidates the option of receiving public funding if they raise a large number of donations of \$100 or less from in-state donors.

- To qualify, a House of Representatives candidate would have to collect 1,500 donations from people in their state of \$100 or less that add up to at least \$50,000.
- Since states vary widely in size, a U.S. Senate candidate would have to collect 2,000 qualifying contributions plus 500 times the number of congressional districts in the state. A Senate candidate in NC, which has 13 districts, would have to raise 8,500 qualifying contributions.
- Qualified House candidates receive \$900,000 in Fair Elections funding, split 40% for the primary and 60% for the general.
- Qualified Senate candidates receive \$1.25 million plus \$250,000 per congressional district in their state. The funding is split 40% for the primary and 60% for the general election.

Candidates can receive additional public funds if they continue to raise small donations in their state:

- Donations of \$100 or less from in-state donors would be matched on a 4 to 1 basis.
- The total amount of public funds is limited to three times the initial allocation for the primary, and again for the general.

Joint fundraising committees between candidates and parties would be prohibited. Fair Elections helps offset the cost of media:

- Participating candidates receive a 20% reduction from the lowest broadcast rates.
- Participating Senate candidates who win the primaries can receive \$100,000 in media vouchers per congressional district in their state. House candidates receive one \$100,000 media voucher.

How is this program funded? The cost of Fair Elections for Senate races would be borne by a very small fee on large government contractors and, in the House bill for House races, it would come from ten percent of revenues generated through the auction of unused broadcast spectrum.

For the text of the House version of the bill, [click here](#). For the Senate version of the bill, [click here](#).