

ASSEMBLY, No. 1693

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 213th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2008 SESSION

Sponsored by:

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District 24 (Sussex, Hunterdon and Morris)

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District 24 (Sussex, Hunterdon and Morris)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes eleven-member “New Jersey Clean Elections Financing Study Commission.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel



1 AN ACT establishing the "New Jersey Clean Elections Financing
2 Study Commission."

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. The Legislature finds and declares:

8 a. Good government groups and editorial writers have
9 enthusiastically endorsed the practice of "clean elections" as a way
10 to provide for the public financing of legislative elections.

11 b. Advocates of "clean elections" contend that funding elections
12 with public money removes special interest money from campaigns,
13 frees candidates from the task of fundraising, limits the amount of
14 money spent in campaigns and provides an equal financial base for
15 all candidates.

16 c. "Clean elections" systems are already in law and functioning
17 in other states including Arizona, Maine, and Connecticut.

18 d. Although New Jersey established a "clean elections" pilot
19 program for the public financing of candidates for the office of
20 member of the Legislature, it may be desirable to establish a "clean
21 elections" system at various levels, including State-wide general
22 elections, and primary elections for the Legislature and State-wide
23 county general elections.

24 e. It is fitting and proper for this Legislature to explore the issue
25 of "clean elections," examine campaign finance laws in other states
26 and give serious consideration to establishing such a system for
27 financing candidates in this State.

28

29 2. There is established a commission, to be known as the New
30 Jersey Clean Elections Financing Study Commission, to consist of
31 eleven members. The Treasurer of the State of New Jersey and the
32 Executive Director of the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement
33 Commission, or their designees, shall serve as ex-officio members.
34 The Senate President shall appoint two members of the Senate, each
35 of whom shall be a member of a different political party. The
36 Speaker of the General Assembly shall appoint two members of the
37 General Assembly, each of whom shall be a member of a different
38 political party. Five members of the public, who shall be New
39 Jersey residents and interested in elections and campaign finance,
40 shall be appointed by the Governor, two of whom shall be
41 appointed from among persons nominated by the Senate President
42 and two of whom shall be appointed from among persons
43 nominated by the Speaker of the General Assembly.

44 A vacancy in the membership of the commission shall be filled
45 in the same manner in which the original appointment was made.

1 3. The members of the commission shall be appointed and shall
2 hold their initial organizational meeting within 45 days after the
3 effective date of this bill. The members shall elect one of the
4 members to serve as chair and one of the members to serve as vice-
5 chair. The chair may appoint a secretary, who need not be a
6 member of the commission. The members of the commission shall
7 serve without compensation, but shall be eligible for reimbursement
8 for necessary and reasonable expenses incurred in the performance
9 of their official duties within the limits of funds appropriated or
10 otherwise made available to the commission.

11
12 4. The commission shall meet at the call of the chair. The
13 commission shall hold at least three public hearings in different
14 parts of the State and elicit testimony from the public at such times
15 and places as the chair shall designate. A meeting of the
16 commission shall be called at the request of six of the commission's
17 members and six members of the commission shall constitute a
18 quorum at any meeting thereof.

19
20 5. It shall be the duty of the commission to:
21 a. examine the funding experience, both positive and negative,
22 of other states that have established a "clean elections" system of
23 public financing for candidates for public office;
24 b. examine the costs and the means by which to finance a "clean
25 elections" system of public financing for candidates in this State;
26 c. determine the feasibility of establishing a "clean elections"
27 system of public financing for the general and primary elections for
28 candidates for the Legislature and for the general elections for
29 county elective offices; and
30 d. consider such other matters relating to the funding of "clean
31 elections" systems as the members of the commission may deem
32 appropriate.

33
34 6. The commission shall be entitled to call to its assistance and
35 avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or
36 municipal department, board, bureau, commission or agency, as it
37 may require and as may be available for its purposes, and to employ
38 stenographic and clerical assistance and incur traveling and other
39 miscellaneous expenses as may be necessary in order to perform its
40 duties, within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made
41 available to the commission.

42
43 7. The commission shall report its findings and recommendations
44 to the Legislature, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164
45 (C.52:14-19.1), and the Governor within nine months of its initial
46 organizational meeting.

1 8. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire 14
2 days after the commission submits its findings and
3 recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature.

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6 STATEMENT

7
8 This bill establishes an eleven-member "New Jersey Clean
9 Elections Financing Study Commission."

10 The duty of the commission is to:

11 1) examine the funding experience, both positive and negative,
12 of other states that have established a "clean elections" system of
13 public financing for candidates for public office;

14 2) examine the costs and the means by which to finance a "clean
15 elections" system of public financing for candidates in this State;

16 3) determine the feasibility of establishing a "clean elections"
17 system of public financing for the general and primary elections for
18 candidates for the Legislature and for the general elections for
19 county elective offices; and

20 4) consider such other matters relating to the funding of "clean
21 elections" systems as the members of the commission may deem
22 appropriate.

23 The commission's membership is to be bipartisan, the Treasurer
24 and Executive Director of the New Jersey Election Law
25 Enforcement Commission, will serve as ex-officio members. The
26 Senate President will appoint two members of the Senate and the
27 Speaker of the General Assembly will appoint two members of the
28 General Assembly. There shall be five members from the public,
29 they will be New Jersey residents and interested in elections and
30 campaign finance. They will be appointed by the Governor, two
31 with the advice and consent of the Senate President and two with
32 the advice and consent of the Speaker of the General Assembly.

33 The commission is to report its findings and recommendations to
34 the Governor and the Legislature within 9 months of its initial
35 organizational meeting.