

Examples of Voting Rights Policy Projects by Richard Cauchi

- CPPAX Newsletter "New Laws Change State Election Process" – Massachusetts 1974
- Law lowering the age to 18-years for campaign contributions (served as prime sponsor) – enacted 1971
- "Proposed Legislation Program: ..." "Election Law Reform" (sponsors include Michael Dukakis) – 1969
- Campaign Finance Reforms advocacy – (Boston Globe news article 1980)

CPPAX NEWSLETTER – January 1974

Reprint: Excerpt page 1-2

(Richard Cauchi, Executive Director)

New Laws Change State Election Process

During the last few weeks of the 1973 State House session, several major changes were made in the procedure for voter registration and conduct of campaigns. Because the new laws can affect every candidate and every voter, but have received little publicity, the following is a quick summary of the major items. For complete copies of these statutes or information about their implication, contact the CPPAX Electoral Reform Committee at 11 South Street, Boston, 02111.

UNIFORM VOTER REGISTRATION--(Chapter 1137 of 1973) revises the entire system for the registration of new voters by providing a standard form based on a few factual questions to be answered under oath by all new registrants. All questions about financial

continued...

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NEW ELECTION LAWS...

status or duration of residence are eliminated; thus giving equal treatment to students and those who move frequently. Although signed into law on December 4, the new procedure does not officially go into effect until June 1, 1974.

CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION DISCLOSURES--(Chapter 1173 of 1973) establishes stricter controls on all aspects of campaign contributions and expenditures. In brief, all incumbents are automatically treated as "candidates"; the annual limit on individual contributions is lowered from \$3000 to \$1000 per candidate; loans are defined as regular contributions until repaid; and the details of all contributions above \$15.00 must be reported. In addition a Director of Campaign Finance, responsible for analyzing records and initiating prosecutions, is created; penalties for illegal campaign practices are raised; specific reporting dates are established to assure that all information is available before elections; and a total dollar ceiling is set for media expenses in campaigns for all state offices (media is defined as television, radio, newspaper, billboard, and magazine advertising plus postage--the new spending limits range from \$500,000 each for the primary and general election for Governor, to \$15,000 for state senate, to \$5,000 for state representative). Effective date: January 1, 1974.

SIGNATURE REQUIREMENT FOR INDEPENDENTS--(Chapter 849 of 1973) reduces the total number of certified signatures needed for ballot listing as an independent from 3% to 2% of the total vote cast for Governor in the last election in the district concerned (37,400 for statewide races). In districts where boundaries have changed since the last Gubernatorial election, independents must file twice the signatures required for party primary papers. This chapter became effective on December 28, 1973.

IMMEDIATE REGISTRATION ADDRESS CORRECTION FOR LOCAL MOVES--(Chapter 255 of 1973) allows any voter who moves from one street or precinct to another within the same municipality to be listed at the new address as soon as the information is given to the local clerk. The prior law required voting from the old address until January 1 of the next year, even if the voter now resided in a different district. The new procedure became effective on August 7, 1973.

For 1974 the CPPAX Electoral Reform Committee has filed or co-sponsored a number of additional reforms including twelve hour minimum polling hours for all elections; elimination of the notary requirements for absentee ballots; and simplified forms for nomination papers and initiative petitions. Public hearings on these bills will be announced in the next few weeks; contact the Electoral Reform Committee for more details.



SENATE No. 516

SPONSORS →

By Mr. McKinnon, a petition of the Citizens for Participation Politics, by Richard Cauchl, executive director, Allan R. McKinnon, Jack H. Backman and William J. Spence for legislation to reduce the age at which an individual may make campaign contributions. Election Laws.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-One.

AN ACT REDUCING THE AGE AT WHICH AN INDIVIDUAL MAY MAKE CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Section six of chapter fifty-five of the General Laws, as
2 amended, is hereby further amended by striking out in the
3 seventh sentence thereof, the words "twenty-one" and insert-
4 ing in place thereof the words "eighteen", so that the sentence
5 shall read as follows:— Notwithstanding the provisions of this
6 section an individual of less than eighteen years of age shall
7 not make campaign contributions in an amount in excess of
8 twenty-five dollars in the aggregate during any one calendar
9 year.

S. 516. (Election Laws) Bill reducing the age at which an individual may make campaign contributions. Reported in Senate, Mar. 31; ord. 3d, Apr. 1; eng. Apr. 5; rec'd in House, Apr. 7; ord. 3d and eng. Apr. 8; to Gov. Apr. 14; recalled in Senate; ret. to Gov. Apr. 27; signed, May 6, Chap. 253.

A PROPOSED 1969 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM FOR
CITIZENS FOR PARTICIPATION POLITICS

PART I: ELECTION LAW REFORM

The political campaigns of the past year graphically illustrated some of the ambiguities and shortcomings of Massachusetts electoral laws. In an attempt to change this situation, some individual members of CPP have submitted a series of bills to the 1969 General Court. It is hoped that local groups and members will actively work to support this legislation, including testifying at legislative committee hearings and educating and pressuring their local legislators. These bills include:

HOUSE NO. 2207 by Mr. Dukakis of Brookline:

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ELECTION OF NATIONAL CONVENTION DELEGATES AND ALTERNATE DELEGATES OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND REGULATING THEIR CONDUCT.

Section 1 - Requires popular election of all delegates, including national committeeman and national committeewoman, thus preventing possible recurrence of this year's incident at Chicago where these two members of the Democratic delegation refused to obey the results of the Massachusetts primary.

Sections 2 and 3 - Provide for district election of at least 2/3rds of the national convention delegates, thus reducing the chance of a boss-controlled delegation, and giving a fairer chance to challenging states. Also eliminates fractional votes and the possibility that such reduced votes would be given to dissident members.

Sections 4 and 5 - Define that vacancies shall be filled by majority vote of the members of the delegation, thus preventing arbitrary or unfair substitutions such as the last-minute addition of non-elected delegates by the Democrats in Chicago.

Sections 6 and 7 - Define court jurisdiction to include out-of-state violations of the Massachusetts binding primary law, and clarifies the fact that there are penalties for refusal to abide by the decision of the voters in a primary.

petition by:

Michael S. Dukakis of Brookline
Richard Cauchi of Boston
Alvin Levin of Lincoln

PLEASE TURN OVER

Feb. 1969

CPP Legislative Reform Program

HOUSE NO. 2208 by Mr. Dukakis of Brookline

AN ACT DEFINING THE HOURS POLLING PLACES SHALL BE OPEN DURING PRIMARY ELECTIONS.

This bill requires all polling places to be open at least 12 hours for primaries, and is a change in the original law which only says "at least two hours".

petition by:

Michael S. Dukakis of Brookline
Richard Cauchi of Boston
Alvin Levin of Lincoln

HOUSE NO. 2986 by Rep. Charles Chantlan of Wavertown

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEES OF POLITICAL PARTIES, AND FOR THE BIENNIAL ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF STATE, WARD, AND TOWN COMMITTEES.

This bill would require that the two national committee members of political parties be popularly elected every four years, instead of being chosen by the State Committee. Also provides for the election of State Committee and Ward and Town Committee members every two years, as well as requiring these committees to meet at least twice a year. This is intended to make such committees more responsive to their constituents, and more publicly visible in their activities.

petition by:

Richard Cauchi of Boston
Arsenis Danley of Winchester
Alvin Levin of Lincoln
Carolyn Stouffer of Hingham

HOUSE NO. 3907 by Rep. George Young of Schuette

AN ACT RELATING TO THE SELECTION OF DISTRICT AND AT-LARGE DELEGATES TO NATIONAL POLITICAL CONVENTIONS.

This bill provides for 2/3rd of national delegates to be elected by Congressional Districts, and is a change in the old law which only calls for "two from each district".

petition by:

Marjorie R. Schiller of Schuette

Senate urged to act on campaign finance

Bill would provide matching funds for statewide political campaigns

Globe State House Bureau

Citing revelations of campaign financing abuse outlined before the state corruption commission, a coalition of public interest groups yesterday urged the state Senate to act on the commission's proposal for partial funding of political campaigns.

The bill, filed five weeks ago by the commission and awaiting admission by the Senate, would provide matching funds for statewide and legislative political campaigns. Funds would be generated by a \$2 check-off option on state tax returns, similar to the provision on federal tax forms.

Taxpayers would not be liable for the contribution. On current state tax forms, a taxpayer may choose to contribute \$1 to public campaign financing and that amount is added to the tax bill.

The measure would also require more complete financial disclosure statements from candidates and would limit to \$250 the annual contribution an individual could make to a candidate receiving public funds. The current limit is \$1000.

The coalition, including labor, consumer and feminist groups, warned that failure to act on the

reform measure will perpetuate a system of special interest contributions to candidates in exchange for political favors.

"Testimony before the Special Commission Concerning State and County buildings, has demonstrated amply the need to change the way we elect our public officials," Barbara Fegan, president of the Massachusetts League of Women Voters, told a State House news conference.

"The legislation in question is an honest attempt to address and remedy many of the demonstrated weaknesses of the present system."

The infusion of public dollars into campaign chests will encourage broader participation in political campaigns, proponents also argued.

"This year 43 percent of the Senate and House members have uncontested elections," John Stuebing of the Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group noted. "Only public financing of legislative campaigns can bring more qualified candidates into the arena of elected office." Under terms of the commission-drafted bill, only candidates facing opposition would be eligible for public finance.

Richard Cauchi, executive director of Citizens for Participation in Political Action, said the \$1000 maximum contribution per individual allowed under the current law "could equal 10 or even 20 percent of a candidate's total funds."

"By proposing to match only the first \$100 of each individual contribution, the commission bill strikes a good balance between encouraging larger numbers of smaller donations, and preserving the right of individuals who are able to give more," he said.

The measure has been admitted by the House for consideration but awaits similar action by the Senate. Once the bill is admitted to both chambers, it would be referred to the Joint Committee on Election Laws.

Fifty-six state legislators are either sponsors or cosponsors to the reform bill. Representatives of the United Auto Workers, Americans for Democratic Action, the National Organization for Women, the Assn. of Massachusetts Consumers and the American Assn. of University Women also endorsed the bill at yesterday's State House press conference.