

## House Republican Press Release

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### Reps Labriola, Williams, Greene: GOP Campaign Finance Proposal would Curb Publicly-Financed Election Abuse



#### ***Other Reforms Would Strengthen Office of State Ethics, Improve Access to Voting Booth***

House Republicans today unveiled comprehensive reforms to curb publicly financed campaign abuse, ensure impartial ethics safeguards and allow for easier access to voting booths.

The **“Government for the People,”** proposals would provide for true transparency in publicly funded elections, real independence for watchdog agencies - especially the Office of State Ethics - and improved access to the ballot box, state Representatives David K. Labriola, R-131<sup>st</sup> District, Sean Williams, R-68<sup>th</sup> District, and Len Greene, R-105<sup>th</sup> District, said today.

"As a member of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, I will work to shepherd these important proposals to the floor of the House. The people of Connecticut deserve to have their state government be as honest and transparent as possible," Representative Labriola said.

#### **Cleaning Up Publicly Financed Campaigns**

The House Republican proposal would scale back the amount of money available to candidates based on when they qualify to access the Citizens Election Fund that taxpayers support starting 45 days before the election. In the special election for the 32<sup>nd</sup> District Senate seat, for example, the late-qualifying Democratic candidate received \$63,750 in taxpayer dollars to help cover his campaign expenses just over one week before the special election January 15<sup>th</sup>.

“It is an irresponsible and reckless use of taxpayer dollars to allow candidates who do not qualify for public financing until one to three weeks before the election to receive the full amount allowed under current law. It almost guarantees that a candidate would waste the money on last-minute campaign gimmicks that would have little or no effect on the outcome of the election. The taxpayers of Connecticut deserve better than that,” said Representative Williams.

#### **Strengthen Office of State Ethics – Don’t Strip It**

House Republicans also proposed strengthening oversight by the Office of State Ethics by requiring all lawmakers to disclose any potential personal conflicts they might have with any individual that might have a bearing on pending legislation. Instead of stripping

the commission of authority as other lawmakers have proposed, House Republicans seek to give the agency greater independent oversight.

“We already have some of the strongest ethics laws in the country. Our proposals would further strengthen them by specifically empowering the independent Office of State Ethics to investigate personal conflicts of interest by state legislators and other state officials. Giving a committee composed of legislators the responsibility for overseeing compliance with our ethics laws, as some have proposed, is like allowing the fox to guard the hen house,” Representative Greene said.

### **Ballot Box Access**

Republicans also proposed amending the state Constitution to allow any registered voter to use an absentee ballot to provide greater access to the ballot box. Currently the state imposes restrictions on absentee balloting and requires voters to prove that they cannot cast a ballot in person election day.