

ARTICLE XI. DEMOCRACY FUND¹

Democracy Fund Pledge
and
Pilot Program
DRAFT

¹Editor's note(s)—Ord. No. 1589, adopted May 4, 2009, repealed former Art. XI, §§ 2-821—2-834 in its entirety and enacted new provisions as herein set out. Former Art. XI pertained to similar subject matter and derived from Ord. No. 1442, adopted March 5, 2007.

Sec. 2-821. Purpose.

The purpose of this ordinance is to ensure that all the citizens of New Haven have a fair and meaningful opportunity to participate in the election of their mayor. Specifically, the ordinance aims to:

- (1) Counter the perception that New Haven's public policy is influenced by campaign contributions;
- (2) Ensure that meritorious candidates for citywide office are able to raise and spend sufficient campaign funds through public financing of elections to convey their messages to the voters;
- (3) Reduce the need for ongoing fundraising and to encourage candidates for citywide office to spend more time communicating with citizens;
- (4) Give all citizens an opportunity for a reasonable supporting role in the selection of candidates for citywide office by making even small contributions meaningful.

(Ord. No. 1589, 5-4-09)

Sec. 2-822. Definitions.

Sec. 2-836. Democracy Fund Pledge.

- (A) A Pledge Candidate agrees to abide by the following limitations during their campaign:
- (a) Campaign committees of participating candidates will voluntarily limit contributions to only be from individuals between \$1.00 and \$250.00.
 - (b) Participating committees will voluntarily not accept contributions from Political Action Groups (PACs), business entities, contracting firms, or special interest groups. Any contribution received from a disallowed source will be returned within 10 days of receipt. Contributions that cannot be returned will be remitted to the Democracy Fund.
 - (c) A participating candidate and their campaign committee will commit to filing campaign finance reports, as required by the municipality and Connecticut's State Election Enforcement Commission (SEEC). If made available by the SEEC, candidates agree to submit filings online via the eCRIS system. This measure ensures transparency of campaign filings for all voters to access before the election.
 - (d) Candidates agree to report all expenditures, receipts, and voluntary contributions. Grant money given to candidates will be considered the first money spent by the campaign. Any excess funds at the end of the campaign may either be:
 - (i) Returned to contributors at a prorated rate;
 - (ii) Donated to a New Haven-based charitable 501(c)3 organization; or
 - (iii) Returned to the New Haven Democracy Fund.
 - (e) Candidates who sign the Pledge for the Primary must also participate in the General Election, should they win the Primary Election. Candidates who did not participate in the Primary may choose to participate in the General election, however, their campaign coffer must be zeroed out before they can participate, with any non-qualifying funds remaining from the Primary being returned to contributors or to the Democracy Fund.
 - (f) Participating Candidates must participate in at least one public forum, debate or town hall-style meeting prior to the election, even if they are in an uncontested race, to ensure that the public has access to their elected leaders and can make informed decisions.

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- (g) Once a candidate has taken the Pledge, they may not rescind participation. Non-compliance will result in a formal request to return the Grant and public notice of such a request.

Sec 2-837. Grants for Non-Citywide Offices.

Secs. 2-836—2-850. Reserved