

February 20, 2024

Good morning Chair and members, my name is Patrick Keane and I am a Council Member for the City of Rochester. I am testifying today as a concerned citizen since our City has not taken a formal position on this legislation.

I speak today in support of Representative Boldon's bill, SF 6942 - LOCAL CANDIDATE PUBLIC FINANCE PROGRAM.

To summarize, this bill allows a local government entity like the City of Rochester to establish a Public Finance program for local candidates and our local elections. The legislation is modeled on state level programs already available in Minnesota and widely used in other cities around the country.

First I want to commend this legislation as a way of enhancing local government options versus restricting them. Frankly, I don't know if our city would take advantage of such a program, but, again I'm glad to see this option would be in place if Rochester did choose to use it.

Well designed public financing options reduce barriers to entry for public office and allows candidates from a wider variety of backgrounds to run for elected office in a city like Rochester. A well-designed public financing option could also allow our city to bring more equity to our municipal elections.

This bill is the opposite of a mandate. You are creating options that local government entities can take advantage of if they so choose.

Again I commend this legislative body for supporting legislation that expands local government options. It should be said that this only creates an option; it creates no requirement for local governments to act.

In closing, I want to stress that I am reaching out to you today as a private citizen with local government experience. I hope you give this legislation your serious consideration.

Thank you

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