



**March 4, 2025**

**The Honorable Senator Jim Carlson, Chair**  
**Senate Elections Committee and Members**  
Minnesota Senate  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**In support of SF1915**

Dear Senator Carlson and Members of the Senate Elections Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Clean Elections Minnesota to express our strong support for SF1915 of the legislation requiring the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board to study voluntary campaign spending limits in Minnesota. We commend your committee's efforts to address the growing influence of money in politics and recognize this bill as an important step toward ensuring our elections are fair, accessible, and responsive to the will of the people.

At Clean Elections Minnesota, our mission is to build a healthy and inclusive democracy by advocating for reforms that reduce the influence of big money and corporate special interests in our political system. Public financing and voluntary campaign spending limits are essential tools in this fight. By providing an alternative to unlimited private money in elections, these measures allow candidates to focus on their constituents and the issues that matter most to their communities, rather than on raising money from wealthy donors or special interest groups.

We believe that the study will be crucial in providing lawmakers with the data and insights needed to assess the effectiveness of Minnesota's public subsidy program. By tracking participation trends, spending patterns, and the impact of independent expenditures, this study will help identify whether the current public subsidy system is working as intended and provide guidance on how to improve it.

There is a growing concern across the country that big money is buying our elections and increasingly dictating policy decisions that benefit the wealthiest few, while leaving everyday people behind. The amount of money required to run competitive campaigns in Minnesota, especially in high-stakes races, has grown exponentially in recent years. This reality undermines the very foundation of our democracy, where all citizens, regardless of their financial means, should have an equal voice in the political process.

Public financing, as provided through Minnesota's public subsidy program, can help level the playing field. By providing candidates with the means to run viable campaigns without relying on wealthy donors, we can ensure that our electoral system remains focused on representing the interests of all Minnesotans, not just the privileged few.

The proposed study will be especially valuable in helping us understand trends in candidate participation, comparing the spending of publicly funded candidates with those who opt out, and analyzing the influence of outside groups through independent expenditures. Additionally, by

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examining how other states implement and structure public financing programs, the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board can offer recommendations that could help Minnesota strengthen its system and increase the participation of candidates from all backgrounds and political perspectives.

As the study progresses, we urge the committee to continue exploring how we can build a more robust public financing system that encourages greater competition and fosters accountability in our political process. We believe that the inclusion of recommendations to enhance the current public subsidy program is a key opportunity to create long-term solutions that make our democracy more responsive and representative of the people. This and SF9, Senator Rest, Westlin and Koran's Public Contribution Refund Modernization Act, will strengthen the program and limit the influence of big money in politics and give more power to voters.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue. Clean Elections Minnesota stands ready to support your efforts to advance a fair and transparent electoral system, and we look forward to working with you and your colleagues to ensure that public financing remains a central tool in protecting and preserving the integrity of our democracy.

Sincerely,

*Mary Hartnett*

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