



**KING COUNTY**

1200 King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

**Signature Report**

**April 15, 2008**

**Motion 12734**

**Proposed No.** 2007-0430.3

**Sponsors** Ferguson, Constantine and Phillips

1                   A MOTION expressing the intent of the council to research  
2                   the subject of campaign financing.

3  
4                   WHEREAS, increasing amounts of money are being spent nationwide each year  
5 on election campaigns, and

6                   WHEREAS, many elected officials and candidates for elective office are  
7 therefore finding it necessary to spend increasing amounts of time on fundraising and less  
8 time interacting with voters and engaging in a vigorous public debate about the issues of  
9 the day, and

10                  WHEREAS, the increasing dependence of election campaigns on large financial  
11 contributions has reduced public trust in government by, at a minimum, creating the  
12 perception that wealthier citizens and groups hold a disproportionate influence over  
13 elected officials and candidates for office and, therefore, on public policy, and

14                  WHEREAS, the current campaign finance system discourages competition for  
15 office by providing an advantage to incumbents and experienced fundraisers, and

16 WHEREAS, the current campaign finance system thereby presents ongoing  
17 barriers to effective political participation by those who lack significant disposable  
18 income or the ability to raise large sums of money, and

19 WHEREAS, public financing would recast the political campaign as a debate  
20 about ideas and experience rather than fundraising ability, and

21 WHEREAS, public financing would promote broader participation in civic life by  
22 reducing the barriers to running for public office or meaningfully participating in politics,  
23 and

24 WHEREAS, public financing would not infringe upon the First Amendment  
25 protection of free speech because acceptance of public funds would be voluntary and  
26 candidates could choose not to receive public funds, and

27 WHEREAS, seven states and two major cities have instituted systems for public  
28 financing of some of their elections, and

29 WHEREAS, bills have been introduced in the United States House of  
30 Representatives and the United States Senate to provide full public financing for  
31 congressional elections;

32 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

33 The council intends to conduct research on the following subjects and to report  
34 the results of its research by May 12, 2008:

35 A. Review of existing local law pertaining to campaign financing;

36 B. Review of trends in the cost of campaigns for elective local offices;

37 C. Options for updating local law, including, but not limited to, significantly  
38 lowering maximum contribution limits and exploring public financing and matching

39 funds, with a view toward the experience of other jurisdictions that have implemented  
40 public financing for campaigns;

41 D. Review of lessons learned in the seven states and two cities where public  
42 campaign financing has been implemented, including identifying any potential obstacles  
43 and impediments to implementation of public financing of campaigns.

44 E. The history of public financing in Seattle and King County prior to 1993;

45 F. Estimates of the costs associated with such updates, including implementation

46 and oversight of public campaign financing; and

47 G. Options for funding those costs.

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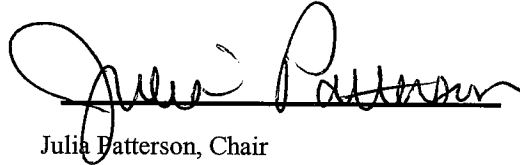
Motion 12734 was introduced on 8/20/2007 and passed as amended by the Metropolitan King County Council on 4/14/2008, by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Ms. Patterson, Mr. Constantine, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Gossett and Mr. Phillips

No: 4 - Mr. Dunn, Ms. Lambert, Mr. von Reichbauer and Ms. Hague

Excused: 0

KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Julia Patterson, Chair

ATTEST:



Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

Attachments      None