

House Republican Press Release

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KALINOWSKI & HOUSE REPUBLICANS OFFER TRUE ETHICS, CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM: GOVERNMENT FOR THE PEOPLE



HARTFORD –State Representative Ray Kalinowski (R-100) stood with House Republicans this week as they unveiled comprehensive reforms this week to prevent publicly financed campaign abuse, ensure impartial ethics safeguards and allow for easier access to voting booths.

The “Government for the People,” proposals highlight the need for stronger governmental reform: true transparency in publicly funded elections, real independence for watchdog agencies, particularly the overhauled state Ethics Commission and unfettered access to the ballot box.

Kalinowski noted that the two special elections held recently have exposed problems with the new publicly financed campaign system that is now in place. “With over \$10 million of taxpayers’ money ready to be funneled into campaign coffers, we need to examine the lessons from the two special elections, and eliminate the potential for serious abuse which goes against the intent of this law,” he said.

Cleaning Up Publicly Financed Campaigns

The 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 32nd District Senate seat, for example, the late-qualifying Democratic candidate received \$63,750 to spend on just over one week before the special election Jan. 15.

The candidate’s disclosure form indicated he spent \$50,500 of taxpayers’ money on two mailings but provides no details.

Strengthen Ethics Commission – Don’t Strip It

The Republicans also proposed strengthening Ethics Commission oversight 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.

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.