



**House of Representatives**  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO: Members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives**

**FROM: Representative Brendan F. Boyle**

**DATE: February 9, 2011**

**SUBJECT: Co-sponsorship: Public Financing for Supreme Court elections**

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In the near future, I plan to introduce legislation to amend the Pennsylvania Election Code allowing for partial public financing for Pennsylvania Supreme Court elections and retentions. This legislation is very similar to House Bill 1837 introduced by Representative Rick Taylor last session.

Our justice system is predicated on the notion that we are all to be treated equally and fairly under the law. In order for this to be achieved, judges must rule impartially regardless of an individual's party affiliation or their monetary contributions. Often times, judges hear cases which directly involve individuals or organizations that have made substantial contributions to their campaigns, resulting in at the very least a perceived, and at worst a real, conflict of interest. The Supreme Court, as the court of last resort in Pennsylvania, should especially be free of this perception.

My legislation would amend the Pennsylvania Election Code by adding a chapter entitled "Pennsylvania Fair Campaign Funding" to protect against corruption or the appearance of corruption. It also provides limited campaign funding for statewide Supreme Court elections. Taxpayers could designate on their tax return form that they want to contribute \$3 to the fund. Licensed attorneys are required to make a contribution to the fund of up to \$50 when applying for or renewing their licenses to practice law. Any candidate for election or retention as a Supreme Court justice may apply for Pennsylvania Fair Campaign funding if he or she meets the contributory thresholds established in the bill. More than a dozen states now have some form of public financing for elections. My legislation would enable Pennsylvania to join these states.

Please join me in co-sponsoring this legislation by contacting Kristen Womelsdorf in my office at (717) 787-3055 or [KWomelsd@pahouse.net](mailto:KWomelsd@pahouse.net). Thank you.