

March 17, 2008

Honorable Max Maxfield
Wyoming Secretary of State
State Capitol
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Re: House Enrolled Act No. 42

Dear Secretary Maxfield:

I have exercised my veto authority with regard to House Enrolled Act No. 42 being original House Bill No. 9. This bill relates to campaign finance and reporting.

This legislation contained both positive and negative elements for our political process. The original impetus for the legislation was to address the use of Political Action Committees as a means to circumvent the limitations on individual contributions B a laudable goal. Unfortunately, the measure evolved well beyond its original purpose. Since the proposed legislation does not contain appropriations, I am forced to accept or veto the entire package. On balance, I feel obligated to reject the entire package.

Current law limits individual contributions to political candidates to \$1,000. This is a healthy sum by any measure. The proposed legislation increases the \$1,000 limit to \$3,500. One of the most difficult and painful parts of running for office is raising money. But the process does force the candidate to articulate their purpose in running and to persuade individuals to part with their hard earned treasure, whether it be \$5 or \$1,000. By raising the contribution limits to \$3,500, we spare the candidate, but we increase the role of those with wealth in the political process. As citizens we have all criticized the role of big money in politics B raising the contribution limits from \$1,000 to \$3,500 will simply make matters worse. Further, the legislation completely eliminates the \$25,000 limitation on political contributions.

In order to place this veto in context, a review of the campaign filings at the Secretary of State's Office is instructive. The following summary of the last election may not be 100 percent accurate but it reflects the general fundraising and expenditure patterns of Wyoming politics.

STATEWIDE - EXCLUDING GOVERNOR AND FEDERAL OFFICES:

Primary Election

Average receipts = \$77,450

Average expenditures = \$48,086

General Election

Average receipts = \$52,365

Average expenditures = \$20,529

LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATES - Wyoming Senate

Primary Election

Average receipts = \$12,605

Average expenditures = \$5,725

General Election

Average receipts = \$10,674

Average expenditures = \$6,675

LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATES - Wyoming House

Primary Election

Average receipts = \$4,326

Average expenditures = \$1,995

General Election

Average receipts = \$6,697

Average expenditures = \$3,002

The most any candidate spent on a legislative race (primary and general combined) was:

Wyoming Senate = \$62,166

Wyoming House = \$29,310

The most any candidate spent on a statewide race (primary and general combined excluding Governor and Federal Offices) was = \$155,163.

It becomes self-evident that raising the contribution limits from \$1,000 to \$3,500 would simply allow candidates to rely upon an even more limited number of funders rather than broad public participation. This trend would not be healthy for our beloved state. Be it my old libertarian or populist bones, I simply cannot encourage more money from fewer people in the political process. Therefore I have vetoed House Enrolled Act No. 42.

Best regards,
Dave Freudenthal
Governor