



Restoring Balance in our Democracy: D.C. Fair Elections

What is Fair Elections? The Fair Elections became law in the spring of 2018, and creates a **voluntary program** that allows qualified candidates to receive public matching funds for small donations from D.C. residents. **Small donations are matched at a 5:1 rate**, so a \$20 donation is worth \$120 to the candidate. To qualify, candidates must agree to only take smaller contributions, take no money from corporations or PACs, and collect a set number of contributions from D.C. residents before receiving public funds.

“I’ve seen firsthand how difficult it is for everyday residents to have their voices heard on issues that impact their daily lives. Any effort that we can make to increase impact and participation everyday for our residents in our political process is a positive step forward.”

- Councilmember Trayon White, Sr. (Ward 8)

What does it accomplish? According to a 2016 study from Demos, D.C.’s donor class tends to be older, whiter and more male than the District’s population. When candidates fundraise from small donors, they spend more time with every day D.C. residents, which will give candidates a stronger understanding of the concerns of **all Washingtonians**, not just wealthy donors.

“Frankly, the cost of this legislation is a very small price to pay to ... restore the District’s full trust and confidence in the motivations of our elected officials.”- Councilmember Vince Gray (Ward 7)

What offices are included? Included in the program are the offices of Mayor, Attorney General, Chairman or Member of the City Council, and State Board of Education.

Who supports it? DC Fair Elections is **supported by a coalition of more than 70 organizations**, more than **80 community leaders** from all 8 Wards, was **unanimously passed** by every member of the D.C. Council, and was signed and received full funding from the Mayor.

Who benefits? Fair Elections is **good for D.C. residents**, **good for candidates**, and **good for the District** as a whole. By focusing on the voices of everyday people first, candidates will hear more about the needs and perspectives of working families on housing, community safety, the budget, and education, and hear less from developers, big corporations, and wealthy donors. That means **better and more accountable policies**, and **empowering people** to make their voices heard.

What does it cost? Fair Elections represents a modest, but crucial, investment in our democracy. The program is projected to cost roughly \$5 million annually, or **less than .05% of D.C.’s budget**

“When I run for reelection in 2020, I hope this is a tool I can use, to engage my residents in a more meaningful way. This bill will increase the public’s influence, increase their investment in our civic life, and make us all better public servants.” - State Board of Education Member Markus Batchelor (Ward 8)

The DC Fair Elections Program is up and running for the 2020 election cycle!

Go to DCFairElections.org to find out more