



**How to
Support Candidates
for Elected Office under
Connecticut's Public Financing
System in 2010**



CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF
REALTORS[®] INC.

The Voice for Real Estate™ in Connecticut



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Overview

In 2005, the General Assembly approved a campaign finance law that made sweeping changes in the way Connecticut's state election campaigns are funded and in how voters can participate in the electoral process. The new law is complicated, and it includes stiff penalties for violations. Therefore it is important to understand the clear rules for volunteering and raising funds for a candidate.

Please note that this memo addresses the rules for elections for **state candidates**: Governor, Lieutenant Governor, State Attorney General, Secretary of the State, State Comptroller, Treasurer, State Senator and State Representative. There are different rules for Federal Candidates (President, U.S. House, U.S. Senate) and for Municipal Candidates (Mayor, Town Council, etc). The primary difference is that only the State Candidates currently have a significant "Public Financing" component, which is outlined detailed below.

Also, it is important to understand that you can always volunteer your time to help out state Candidates, Federal Candidate and/or Municipal Candidates. All candidates are very happy to receive volunteer assistance from friends and supporters in their communities.

Click the following link to see the latest list of candidate committees and contact information provided by the Secretary of the State's office:

http://www.ct.gov/seec/lib/seec/committeelists/2010_candidate_listing.pdf.

Five for Friends

In 2008, the Connecticut Association of REALTORS® and the REALTORS® PAC launched a program called "Five for Friends," providing members with five ways to support candidates from raising funds to making phone calls.

#1 -- VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME – MAKE PHONE CALLS, ATTEND RALLIES AND CAMPAIGN EVENTS, KNOCK ON DOORS.

Every candidate needs volunteers to contact voters and to seek their votes. A well-organized campaign will have a designated person who organizes volunteers. Identify and contact that person. Tell him/her your preferences, your time availability, and how best to reach you.

Campaign needs will increase as Election Day nears, with tasks such as calling voters with short polling questions; answering phones; attending rallies and events.

The greatest needs will come on Election Day itself, when the campaign will need to organize a small army of people to stand at polling places with literature, monitor the vote, drive voters to the polls, and assist with gathering voting information as the day progresses.

#2 -- LETTERS TO THE EDITOR; ON-LINE COMMENT, CALLING RADIO TALK SHOWS --

Letters to the editor of newspapers continues to be a campaign tool that volunteers are well-suited to assist with. Generally, campaigns seek to send letters in response to stories, editorials and opinion pieces published in the paper, or as stand-alone commentary on a candidate. Those messages are best delivered from volunteer supporters of the candidate, and campaigns are often looking for articulate people to sign a letter or to write their own.

This traditional commentary has now been expanded to include **on-line commenting** on news stories and blogs. As the medium evolves, observers and reporters themselves have begun taking note of the numbers of comments, and in the collective messages in support of or objecting to particular facts or themes. In some cases, news has actually been made in the content of comments. The process is quite simple, and involves following the prompts at the bottom of web stories. The campaigns will circulate target stories and comment themes to willing volunteers.

Radio talk shows often take call-ins, and this is another opportunity for an articulate volunteer to demonstrate community support for a candidate. If the campaigns know when a candidate or issue is to be discussed, they can contact volunteers with the number and message themes. Often, however, issues arise on a given radio show, and a campaign will look for an independent person to initiate calls. Again, the campaign will provide phone numbers, background and a message.

#3 -- LAWN SIGNS

Lawn signs, despite their simplicity, are a logistical nightmare for campaigns. They often are delivered late in the season, after people have been asking for them, and need to be placed in a hurry. Assistance with the rapid placement of lawn signs is welcomed by most campaigns.

In addition to being able to put one on their home lawns, REALTORS® are in a position to know other property owners who would accept signs.

#4 – HELPING WITH CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS FOR STATE CAMPAIGNS

Raising funds for a candidate is the most regulated of the campaign tasks. Under the new law, candidates can qualify for grants from the **Citizen's Election Fund** ("CEF") by collecting contributions of a specific amount and the corresponding signatures from a specific number of people who reside in their town, district, or the state, depending on the office sought.

As many candidates are finding, meeting the new requirements can be a time-consuming and difficult task. This, however, has created a new opportunity for supporters of a given candidate to demonstrate that support by helping the candidate gather qualified contributions and signatures.

In order to qualify for a CEF grant, each Candidate must raise campaign contributions in the following manners. In order to meet qualifications, contributions must be in amounts between \$5 and \$100; and a state-mandated written certification form (usually provided by the Candidate's Campaign representatives) must be executed.

- A candidate for Governor must raise \$250,000; and at least \$225,000 must be raised from people who reside in Connecticut.
- A candidate for Lieutenant Governor, AG, Treasurer, Comptroller or Secretary of the State must raise \$75,000; and at least \$67,500 must be raised from people who reside in Connecticut.
- A candidate for State Senator must raise \$15,000; and at least 300 contributions must be raised from people who reside in that Senate District or from municipalities included in that district (for example, if a state rep. candidate represents part of the City of Hartford, then a qualifying contribution made to the candidate from a person who lives in a different part of Hartford can be counted as one of the 300 necessary qualifying contributions).
- A candidate for State Representative must raise \$5,000; and at least 150 contributions must be raised from people who reside in that State Rep. District, or from municipalities included in that district (the same example of a Hartford contributor applies for qualifying contributions for state rep. candidates).

Important Notes about Prohibited Contributors:

- Contributions to state candidates can never be made or solicited by registered **communicator lobbyists** or their spouses or dependent children.
- Contributions to state candidates can never be made or solicited by principals of state contractors or prospective state contractors or their spouses or dependent children.
- Please contact the CAR Offices for further explanation of these important prohibitions.

Contributing Contributions to a Candidate

Some basic rules:

- Lobbyists and their spouses, state contractors....are prohibited from making and soliciting contributions AND participating in any way in the fundraising process.
- The new law for state campaigns strictly regulates the manner in which some staff members of CAR can assist in fundraising efforts. Senior staff who are registered with the state as lobbyists, for instance, fall under the lobbyist prohibitions, and cannot discuss or participate in specific fundraising efforts.
- Fundraisers cannot be held in corporate or business offices – unless the candidate fully reimburses the business for the “market value” of the use of the Office Space.
- Checks cannot be drawn from “business entity” accounts. "Business entity" is defined under the Elections Laws to mean the following, whether organized in or outside of this state: Stock corporations, banks, insurance companies, business associations, bankers associations, insurance associations, trade or professional associations which receive funds from membership dues and other sources, partnerships, joint ventures, private foundations, as defined in Section 509 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or any subsequent corresponding internal revenue code of the United States, as from time to time amended; trusts or estates; corporations organized under sections 38a-175 to 38a-192, inclusive, 38a-199 to 38a-209, inclusive, and 38a-214 to 38a-225, inclusive, and chapters 594 to 597, inclusive; cooperatives, and any other association, organization or entity which is engaged in the operation of a business or profit-making activity; but does not include professional service corporations organized under chapter 594a and owned by a single individual, non-stock corporations which are not engaged in business or profit-making activity, organizations, as defined

in subdivision (6) of this section, candidate committees, party committees and political committees as defined in this section. For purposes of this chapter, corporations which are component members of a controlled group of corporations, as those terms are defined in Section 1563 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or any subsequent corresponding internal revenue code of the United States, as from time to time amended, shall be deemed to be one corporation.

Individual contributions

If you meet the criteria for an individual contributor – not being a lobbyist or state contractor – write a check on a personal account, fill out the required state certification form. The check and form can be mailed to the candidate’s campaign address, or hand-delivered.

#5 – HOSTING A FUNDRAISER EVENT

- Contact the candidate or their campaign directly. Legislative staffers are prohibited by this law (and previous iterations) from helping in their capacities as employees of the General Assembly. Coordinate a date and time – early evenings during the week are generally good times to schedule fundraising events.
- Pick a location. Business sites/REALTOR® offices are generally difficult to use because the value of the office space must be calculated and reimbursed by the candidate. However; private homes work, but food and drink will need to be calculated and reported to the candidate’s campaign.
- Restaurants and bars are a good option because food and drink are easily organized and costs are easily invoiced to the Candidate’s campaign committee.

Note that a person hosting a fundraising event at his/her home can spend up to \$200 on invitations, food and beverages without the amount being considered a “contribution” to the Candidate. The amount in excess of \$200 would be considered “in-kind” contribution.

Also, an individual can only contribute \$100 to a candidate who is participating in the CEF, so there may be a situation where the Campaign should reimburse the host for all or part of the cost of the event at the host’s home. In any event, the amount spent at a home fundraiser should be tracked and reported to the Candidate’s campaign representatives for record-keeping purposes.

- At the event, provide proper documenting certification forms to be executed by the individual contributors (certification forms are generally supplied by the Candidate’s campaign representatives), and collect those with the checks.
- The Candidate’s campaign should assist you with gathering the contribution checks and the necessary certification forms soon after the fundraising event.

NOTE: There are a few candidates for State Offices who will elect not to participate in the CEF program. In other words, these candidates will not attempt to qualify for CEF grants and will raise money “privately” and/or use their own personal funds to run the campaign. You may still contribute to these candidates (the lobbyist and state contractor prohibitions still apply for these candidates) and you can still volunteer and host fundraisers, etc. The primary difference for the candidates who do not participate in the CEF program is that the amount that an individual can contribute to the Candidate is higher than the \$100 “qualifying contribution” amount that can be contributed to a Candidate who is participating in the CEF.

Link-to documents

http://www.ct.gov/seec/lib/seec/committeelists/2010_candidate_listing.pdf

link to the latest committee lists

NEWSPAPER	EMAIL ADDRESS
(Bridgeport) Connecticut Post	edit@ctpost.com
Bristol Press	editor@bristolpress.com
The News Times	mconolly@newstimes.com
Greenwich Time	letters.greenwichtime@scni.com
Hartford Courant	letters@courant.com
(Manchester) Journal Inquirer	letters@journalinquirer.com
Meriden Record Journal	letters@record-journal.com
The Middletown Press	editor@middletownpress.com
The New Britain Herald	editor@newbritain.com
New Haven Register	letters@nhregister.com
The (New London) Day	editor@newlondonday.com
The (Norwalk) Hour	thehour@cts.nai.net
Norwich Bulletin	letters@bulletin.ctol.net
The Stamford Advocate	letters.advocate@scni.com
The (Torrington) Register Citizen	regcit@connix.com
Waterbury Republican & American	steve-m@cyberbury.net
The (Willimantic) Chronicle	editor@thechronicle.com