

## **Washington State Democratic Party Supports Push For Public Financing of Elections**

On April 26th, 2003, at a statewide Democratic meeting in Spokane, a resolution was passed to support the pursuit of a public campaign finance law affecting all statewide offices. The resolution was introduced at our request by 48<sup>th</sup> district committeeman, Jeff Smith. According to Jeff, "When the State Party learned that there is an effort being made to implement public campaign financing, the members said they wanted to be part of that effort. The resolution authorizes our Party Chair, Paul Berendt, to make sure that we have a seat at the table when the initiative is drawn up and when the campaign is put together." The resolution was worked out by WPC volunteer, Rory O'Sullivan and Jeff Smith. The text of the resolution is as follows:

### **Public Financing for Campaigns Resolution** (Sponsored by Jeff Smith – 48<sup>th</sup> LD SCC member)

Whereas in the 2002 election there were more uncontested races for seats in the Washington State House of Representatives and Washington State Senate than at any time in the last 30 years,

Whereas the increase in the cost of running campaigns has far exceeded the rate of inflation for more than two decades,

Whereas the ability to fundraise is now viewed as one of the most important criteria for potential candidates,

Whereas candidates must spend a significant portion of their time fundraising, detracting from constituent contact,

Whereas the influence of big money has shaken the confidence of the voting public,

Therefore, be it resolved that the Democratic Party of the State of Washington supports the enactment of legislation providing for public financing of campaigns for partisan office.

And, be it further resolved that the Democratic Party of the State of Washington supports a measure that would provide public funding to campaigns in the following conditions:

- a) candidates must demonstrate a solid base of support (to be specified by law):
- b) candidates must agree to limit their acceptance of private contributions to an amount specified by law,
- c) candidates must agree to limit the expenditure of their own funds to an amount specified by law, and
- d) candidates must agree to limit their total campaign expenditure to an amount specified by law.

And be it further resolved that the Democratic Party of the State of Washington participate in the drafting of an initiative to achieve the purposes of this resolution, and in a campaign to secure passage of such an initiative by popular election.

And be it further resolved that the Democratic Party of the State of Washington urges all Party organizations in this state and all public officials elected as Democrats to lend their efforts to ensure the success of such an initiative campaign.