



**Testimony on Senate Bill 270 (an act concerning qualifying contributions under the citizens' election program)**

Submitted by Scott Shepard, Policy Director

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Good afternoon. My name is Scott Shepard. I am the Policy & Research Director for the Yankee Institute for Public Policy, Connecticut's free-market think tank. I submit this note in support of **Senate Bill 270**.

Free, fair and representative government can never be arbitrary, and arbitrary government can never be legitimate. Only if the actions of government are conducted in the full light of day – without reservation, evasion, or dissimulation; and with full explanation of the actions taken and the reasons for them and the reasoning supporting them – can citizens even know if their government is arbitrary or objective, corrupt or fair.

On these grounds, Yankee Institute stands foursquare in favor of legislation, like this proposed bill, that requires government to explain its decisions. Such a requirement is particularly vital in circumstances like these, in which an arm of the state executive is deciding which contributions to a candidate should qualify for state matching funds. The opportunities for mischief in this area are too great, and the consequences of mischief too severe, to permit anything less than full transparency, meaning here full explanation of any decision to disallow any candidate's contribution(s) from qualifying for matching funds. Even the perception of the possibility of misfeasance in this area must deeply undermine the public's faith in the electoral process.

If there is to be public financing of campaigns in Connecticut, the process by which the funds are distributed must be absolutely objective, neutral and fair; completely transparent; and entirely above reproach. Because this bill moves the system in that direction, Yankee Institute supports it.