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December 14, 2006

TO:

Mayor Bob Blanchard
Vice Mayor Lee Pierce
Councilmember Jane Bender
Councilmember Susan Gorin
Councilmember Veronica Jacobi
Councilmember Mike Martini
Councilmember John Sawyer

Re: Item 11.9 on December 19, 2006 agenda:

11.9 REPORT – Amendments to City Code Regarding Public Financing of Council Election Campaigns

Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor and Councilmembers:

When the voters approved Measure O on November 5, 2002, the expressed intent was to reduce the escalating spending for City Council campaigns. The voters clearly understood that, without action, candidates lacking personal wealth or ability to solicit large contributions could not conduct a competitive campaign.

Measure O directed that lower contribution limits and some form of public funding be included in the City Charter. With respect to public funding, the City Attorney, in his impartial analysis, stated: "It is common for such public funding to require candidates who accept such funding to agree to limit their campaign expenditures to an amount which is established as part of the public funding conditions."

The purpose of the ordinance demanded by the passage of Measure O is captured in the first paragraph of the resultant City Charter Amendment:

Section 57. Campaign Finance Reform. The Council shall consider and by ordinance enact new election campaign finance reform measures, *the purpose of which, in part, shall be to reduce the cost of Council election campaigns and increase the accessibility of Council candidates to the electorate.* (Emphasis added.)

Concerned Citizens for Santa Rosa strongly believes that the public funding in conjunction with the \$55,000 contribution limit (adjusted for inflation) has fulfilled the

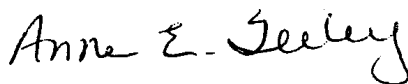
explicitly stated purpose of the charter amendment. **Please do not eliminate the cap and reverse the excellent trend toward more reasonable campaign expenditures.**

There is a proposal to eliminate the cap, with the alleged reason being that independent expenditures can be made late in the campaign and may reflect negatively on a candidate who may be close to the expenditure limit and, therefore, cannot respond. With respect to independent expenditures, CCSR offers the following points:

- Candidates concerned about independent expenditures could (a) not agree to abide by the cap or (b) reserve funds for late responses.
- To deal with the constitutionally protected independent expenditures, the Council has only to look to other cities and states who have enacted Clean Campaign laws for guidance. Rather than going backward and throwing out the only real measure to reduce runaway campaign spending, the Council should be looking at *strengthening* its campaign reform measures. Concerned Citizens for Santa Rosa, for one, stands ready to assist with this effort.

To summarize, we urge the Council to not decimate the campaign finance ordinance by eliminating the voluntary expenditure cap. The current ordinance does reduce overall campaign expenditures and levels the playing field.

Sincerely,



Anne Hudgins and Anne Seeley, Co-Chairs
Concerned Citizens for Santa Rosa