

REQUEST FOR CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION ACTION

MEETING DATE(S): 11/03/2009

SUBMITTED TO: HB Charter Review Commission

SUBMITTED BY: Mark D. Bixby, Charter Review Commissioner *MDB*

SUBJECT: Move Huntington Beach Municipal Code (HBMC) section 2.07.050 (campaign contribution limitations) into the charter

Statement of Issue: Gives the citizens of Huntington Beach control over how much money shall be in local politics by requiring adjustments through future charter amendments.

Recommended Action: Motion to:

Add new Huntington Beach charter section as follows (strikeout/underline used to show changes from current HBMC 2.07.050):

No person shall make to any City candidate or the controlled committee of any such City candidate, and no such candidate or committee shall accept from any such person, a contribution or contributions totaling more than five hundred dollars (\$500) in a City Council, City Clerk, City Treasurer, or City Attorney election cycle. Thereafter said contribution limitations shall ~~increase~~ be adjusted by the October consumer price index (CPI) of Los Angeles, Long Beach, and Anaheim areas, rounded to the nearest \$10, effective at the beginning of each new election cycle.

Analysis:

The 2008 revision to HBMC 2.07.050 increased the campaign contribution limit from the old limit of \$300 up to the new limit of \$500 to account for past increases in campaign costs, and added an inflation adjustment clause to account for future increases in campaign costs. Thus this language should forever ensure that the contribution limit will rise in parallel with campaign costs, so no further modifications should ever be necessary unless truly exceptional conditions warrant.

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My recommended action above moves this language into the charter and makes a slight tweak to allow for the negative inflation (deflation) we are currently experiencing. If campaign costs are decreasing due to deflation, the contribution limit should also decrease.

Given that this language matches the contribution limit to campaign costs, further changes should be highly unlikely. But if circumstances become so exceptional that changes are warranted, public approval must be required via a future charter amendment election.