

# WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §3-12-2

## §3-12-2. Legislative findings and declarations.

The Legislature finds and declares the following:

- (1) Current campaign finance laws permit candidates to spend unlimited amounts of money raised from private sources;
- (2) Current campaign finance laws permit certain independent parties to raise and spend unlimited amounts of money to influence the outcome of elections;
- (3) Over the last decade, fundraising and campaign expenditures in elections for a seat on the Supreme Court of Appeals have dramatically increased in West Virginia;
- (4) In 2000, candidates running for a seat on the Supreme Court of Appeals raised a total of \$1.4 million;
- (5) In 2004, candidates running for a seat on the Supreme Court of Appeals raised a total of \$2.8 million;
- (6) In 2008, candidates running for a seat on the Supreme Court of Appeals raised a total of \$3.3 million;
- (7) In 2012, candidates running for a seat on the Supreme Court of Appeals raised a total of \$3.7 million.
- (8) As spending by candidates and independent parties increases, so does the perception that contributors and interested third parties hold too much influence over the judicial process;
- (9) The detrimental effects of spending large amounts by candidates and independent parties are especially problematic in judicial elections because impartiality is uniquely important to the integrity and credibility of courts;
- (10) As demonstrated by the 2012 West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals Public Campaign Financing Pilot Program, an alternative public campaign financing option for candidates running for a seat on the Supreme Court of Appeals will ensure the fairness of democratic elections in this state, protect the Constitutional rights of voters and candidates from the detrimental effects of increasingly large amounts of money being raised and spent to influence the outcome of elections, protect the impartiality and integrity of the judiciary, and strengthen public confidence in the judiciary; and
- (11) Funding the "West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals Public Campaign Financing Program" from a wide range of revenue sources furthers important state interests in

protecting the integrity of judicial elections and serves to protect the public interest.

WV Legislature