



Arvon J. Perteet, Chair
Charlotte Hill
Ryan Micik
Joe Tuman
Francis Upton IV

Suzanne Doran, Acting Executive Director

June 30, 2022

Oakland City Council
1 Frank Ogawa Plaza
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: Public Ethics Commission Support for the Oakland Fair Elections Act

Dear Council President Bas and Council members,

The Public Ethics Commission (Commission) **supports** the proposed Oakland Fair Election Act. The proposed measure and related amendments will redesign Oakland's public campaign financing system to support meaningful participation by all Oaklanders in the campaign process through a Democracy Dollars program that provides \$100 to every Oakland voter to give to the candidate(s) of their choice.

In 2020, the Commission conducted a comprehensive review of campaign finance data and outcomes from Oakland's existing public financing program and overall campaign finance system, as well as best practices from other jurisdictions. In its subsequent report, *Race for Power: How Money in Oakland Politics Creates and Perpetuates Disparities Across Income and Race*, the Commission articulated the ways in which some Oaklanders lack political power, particularly highlighting inequities in the campaign finance process which relies on those with money to make contributions to political campaigns.

After analyzing alternative public financing programs, the Commission concluded that a system of providing Democracy Dollars was the best approach for Oakland since it provides public funds to City residents in a manner intended to provide equity across the board and incentivizes candidates to engage across all demographics regardless of wealth and history of prior engagement. The proposed measure has been well researched and carefully crafted to implement this ideal approach for Oakland and enjoys broad support from community-based organizations committed to improving equity and democratic government.

Again, the Public Ethics Commission took a support position for the Oakland Fair Elections Act and continues its supportive position pursuant to Charter section 603(h). We believe this innovative model for providing public campaign financing by distributing power out to all eligible Oakland residents will expand citizen participation in the campaign process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Suzanne Doran". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Suzanne Doran
Acting Executive Director

On behalf of the Public Ethics Commission based on action at its public meeting on April 13, 2022, and subsequent subcommittee review.