

HOUSE No. 174

By Mr. Dickie of Reading, petition of Warren G. Harris, Logan R. Dickie and William P. DiVitto that the committee on Election Laws be authorized to investigate the advisability of imposing a limit on the amount of money which may be spent by campaign committees for nominating or electing candidates for public office. Election Laws.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

ORDER RELATIVE TO AUTHORIZING THE COMMITTEE ON ELECTION LAWS TO INVESTIGATE THE ADVISABILITY OF IMPOSING A LIMIT ON THE AMOUNT OF MONEY WHICH MAY BE SPENT BY CAMPAIGN COMMITTEES FOR NOMINATING OR ELECTING CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE.

Whereas, Chapter fifty-five of the General Laws of Massachusetts, known as the "Corrupt Practices Act", restricts the amount of money which a candidate for elective public office may spend for nomination and election; and

Whereas, Said chapter does not restrict the amount of funds which may be collected and spent in behalf of a candidate by his personal or special political campaign committee; and

Whereas, Certain aforementioned political committees have flagrantly violated the General Laws by failing to file returns, and other such committees have acknowledged the receipt and expenditures of huge sums of money, in some cases amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars according to sworn returns on file with the secretary of the commonwealth; and

Whereas, Many states have laws which prohibit the expenditure of huge sums for election purposes and limit not only the amounts which may be spent by the candidates to reasonable sums, but limit the expenditures of any personal campaign committees as well; and

Whereas, The intent and purposes of the so called "Corrupt Practices Act", to keep primary and election expenses of all candidates within reasonable bounds, are thereby circumvented; therefore be it

Ordered, That the joint committee on election laws be directed to study, investigate and determine the advisability of amending chapter fifty-five of the General Laws so that a reasonable limit will be placed on the amount of money which may be spent by any special or personal campaign committee formed for the specific purpose of nominating or electing a candidate for public office. Said committee shall hold public hearings at which individuals and representatives of various political committees may be heard on the subject; and be it further

Ordered, That said committee shall report to the General Court during the nineteen hundred and fifty session the results of its study and investigation so that any changes in or amendments to the present law shall be applicable to the nineteen hundred and fifty election as well as future elections, which report shall be filed with the clerk of the house of representatives.