

## **RESOLUTION FOR LOCAL CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM OPTIONS**

**WHEREAS**, the cost of running for local office is becoming unattainable to everyday citizens in many North Carolina communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the political "money chase" depresses voters and candidates alike, discourages healthy competition, and distracts from open dialogue and debate that are fundamental to the democratic process; and

**WHEREAS**, campaign spending by special interests and political action committees (PACs) distorts the free market and harms the principle of a free and fair marketplace; and

**WHEREAS**, public financing programs that encourage small donations, vote participation, and voluntary spending limits are present at the federal and state level, including in North Carolina statewide judicial and executive branch elections; and

**WHEREAS**, public financing programs free candidates from the burden of never-ending fundraising, increase voter contact with candidates, and allow elections to be "voter-owned"; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Chapel Hill successfully implemented a public financing pilot in 2009, with participating candidates winning more votes than any of their non-participating opponents; and

**WHEREAS**, a North Carolina city or town could not implement such a program unless State law is changed to give local governments the authority to pursue this option; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Cary initiated a public financing program for town council elections but it was later halted by the courts, and other city councils in North Carolina have created committees to examine local campaign reform, but have been hamstrung in the absence of proper enabling language in State law.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Durham City Council calls upon the North Carolina General Assembly and Governor to enact legislation that gives larger towns the authority to sponsor a public financing program for their elections, if they so choose, using local resources, with technical assistance from the State Board of Elections.