

PUBLIC HEARING
ON
BILL 20-718 “CLEAN HANDS ELECTIONS REFORM
AMENDMENT ACT OF 2014”

Before the
Committee on Government Operations
Council of the District of Columbia

The Honorable Kenyan R. McDuffie, Chairperson

September 18, 2014, 11:00 a.m.
John A. Wilson Building, Room 120



Testimony of
Stephen M. Cordi
Deputy Chief Financial Officer
Office of Tax and Revenue
Office of the Chief Financial Officer

Jeffrey S. DeWitt
Chief Financial Officer
District of Columbia Government

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Stephen Cordi, Deputy Chief Financial Officer for the Office of Tax and Revenue. I am pleased to present testimony today on Bill 20-718, the “Clean Hands Elections Reform Amendment Act of 2014.”

Bill 20-718 would, if enacted, add a “Clean Hands” requirement for candidates and their campaign committees as a precondition for the Office of Campaign Finance to permit ballot access.

The legislation would be significantly enhanced if it were tied to the existing “Clean Hands” law applicable to the issuance of all other District permits and licenses set forth in D.C. Official Code, Sections 47-2861 through 47-2866. This could be accomplished by the simple expedient of amending the definition of “applicant” in Section 47-2861 to include “an applicant for ballot access and the applicant’s campaign committees” and of amending the prohibition language of Section 47-2862(a) to insert the words, “,or permit ballot access for any applicant,” following the second word “permit.”

Tying the requirement to the existing law means that the requirement can be implemented as soon as the legislation becomes effective at no expense to the

District government, because the OCFO can provide the Office of Campaign Finance with access to the existing automated “Cleans Hands” system. The automated “Clean Hands” system provides District agencies with verification of compliance with District tax laws by simply entering the taxpayer’s tax identification number into the system. Separately, one of Chief Financial Officer Jeff DeWitt’s strategic planning initiatives is the development of an online “Clean Hands” system whereby applicants will be not only able to verify their “Clean Hands” status online but print out a “Clean Hands” certification should an agency require it.

Utilizing the existing system should be a significant benefit for both candidates and the Office of Campaign Finance, and we urge the Council to take advantage of it.