

SUPPORT *LD 1941*

TO RESTORE CLEAN ELECTIONS FUNDS!

- When voters approved the Maine Clean Election Act by referendum in 1996, it included a dedicated funding mechanism of annual transfers into the Clean Election Fund providing sufficient funding for the use of Clean Elections.
- However, in three legislative sessions in recent years **beginning in 2001**, the legislature transferred from the Clean Election Fund \$6.725 million to balance the state budget. The understanding was that this money would be returned when needed.
- In the first session of the 122nd legislature, this obligation was honored *in part* with a \$2.4 million restoration to the fund (in the 2005 budget). **However, this leaves \$4.325 million of the borrowed funds outstanding, not including interest.**
- Due to the transfers out of the Clean Election Fund, the Fund has had to take early draw-downs on future appropriations just to keep the program running – basically “borrowing from Peter to pay Paul.”
- In 2006, several candidates for Governor are attempting to qualify for Clean Elections funds. A low estimate of the funding needed just for the gubernatorial race is \$4.9 million.
- The Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices estimates that the fund will likely run short for the 2006 elections even with last year’s \$2.4 million restoration and even if a draw down on the future 2007 appropriation is taken. This depends on the number of candidates who qualify for the Clean Elections funding. **The estimated expenses of the legislative candidate use of Clean Elections are about \$4.5 million.**
- **To correct this likely deficit, Rep. John Patrick has sponsored LD 1941 which will restore \$2 million of the \$4.325 still owed to the MCE Fund.**
- Some of the money in the Clean Election Fund also comes from a check-off on state income tax forms by which taxpayers explicitly say they want some of their tax dollars to go to this fund. Last year, this raised \$232,650 for the fund.
- **Potential candidates for office should have confidence in the solvency of the Clean Elections Fund before they choose whether or not, and how to run a campaign.**
- **The Maine Clean Election Act is a model of election reform for the entire nation. It has delivered on its promises and has solid support from across the political spectrum. It is the responsibility of the legislature to ensure that the Maine Clean Election Act remains strong and effective.**

Maine Citizens for Clean Elections

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