

**MAINE CITIZENS CLEAN ELECTIONS / MCCE ACTION
MONEY IN POLITICS / MAINE CLEAN ELECTION ACT
2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

MCCE has identified the following priorities for the 128th Legislature. We are currently identifying legislators who will be cosponsors and champions of legislation in the upcoming session.

In addition to defending the Clean Election Act and all the disclosure and related provisions which we have historically protected from any legislative attack, MCCE will fight for full funding for the Clean Election Fund and for a small number of additional reforms during the 128th Legislature. We are encouraged by preliminary indications that many legislators will support this agenda.

Legislation

- 1. Full Funding for Clean Elections.** MCCE's top legislative priority is to ensure that all funding transfers required by the 2015 initiative are made, and also secure the return of \$1.7 million that the fund was supposed to receive in 2014 but which the legislature failed to transfer. We have opted not to introduce our own bill on Clean Election finances and instead will be working to advance legislation which the Ethics Commission will submit, in accordance with discussions we have already had with Jonathan Wayne at the Ethics Commission. We will also be closely engaged with budget discussions anticipated within the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee. In the budget process we will also advocate for reversing the trend toward using the Clean Election Fund to pay unrelated administrative costs. Finally, we will work with the Ethics Commission on their legally required annual report on the status of the Clean Election Fund.
- 2. Finish the PAC Reform Effort Begun in 2015.** The 127th Legislature prohibited Clean Election candidates from having a PAC. MCCE strongly supports extending that PAC ban to privately funded candidates. Any candidate interested in raising money to support their caucus could raise money directly into a Caucus PAC, allowing the parties to continue to support their candidates in a variety of ways. MCCE will also push for legislation to prohibit any legislator or candidate who operates a PAC from using the funds of that PAC to pay him- or herself for personal services rendered to the PAC.
- 3. Expanding the Session Ban on Lobbyist Contributions.** Currently, lobbyists can give legislators contributions right up to the opening bell of the legislature, and again immediately upon adjournment. Examples of this type of fundraising are many, contrary to the spirit of the law. MCCE has identified a legislator (Sen. Chenette) who has already introduced a bill to expand the "session ban" to become a comprehensive ban throughout the entire year. We will work to support Senator Chenette in this effort with testimony, public pressure, and research efforts.
- 4. Support Ethics Commission Legislation and Major Substantive Rules.** We have been in touch with the Ethics Commission about two bills they are submitting this session. Their comprehensive bill will include many relatively minor provisions in addition to important new statutory language to prohibit PACs from making expenditures to benefit legislators who are officers of the PAC (or their family members). A second Ethics Commission bill would create a new disclosure law applicable to sources contributing over \$100,000 to any PAC, Party Committee

or Ballot Question Committee. In addition, the Ethics Commission's major substantive rulemaking package – which we have reviewed and will support – requires legislative approval.

5. Tax Expenditure Elimination. MCCE supports funding Clean Elections by eliminating wasteful tax expenditures, as voters demanded in the 2015 citizen initiative. OPEGA is currently analyzing tax expenditures and will issue a report before the end of the year. MCCE does not intend to support specific proposals in this area, but will monitor the Taxation Committee as it addresses the public mandate to eliminate at least \$6 million in tax expenditures per biennium as identified by OPEGA.