

Legislative Update 2017: 2

Rapid Response Team
March 27, 2017

Welcome to the second edition of MCCE Action's Rapid Response Team Weekly Update! Thank you for your feedback on these updates - please continue letting me know what you'd like to see covered!

We all sometimes ask - does calling our lawmakers really make a difference? I'd encourage you to read [this examination](#) of how it works on a federal level - and know that in our citizen legislature in Maine, the impact is even greater!

"Luckily for democracy, none of us requires a guaranteed outcome in order to act. We all do plenty of things without knowing if or when or how or how much they will work: we say prayers, take multivitamins, give money to someone on Second Avenue who looks like she needs it. So, too, with calling and e-mailing and writing and showing up in congressional offices: it would be good to know that these actions will succeed, but it suffices to know that they could."

You're getting this email because you indicated you'd like to be informed about Clean Elections, Ranked Choice Voting and other democracy issues in front of the Maine legislature. If you'd like to opt-out of this email, you can [click here](#).

Last week on...

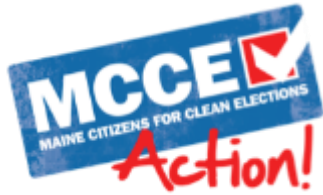
We continue to churn through bills, while keeping our eyes on the big picture fights to preserve Clean Elections and roll back special interest influence.

Here are updates on some of the bills we are tracking:

[LD791](#): An Act Regarding Advertisements by Maine Clean Election Act Candidates. [MCCE testified in opposition](#), because this bill would place unequal burdens on Clean Election candidates, and require an inaccurate disclaimer.

[LD793](#): MCCE [testified in favor](#) of 'An Act To Limit Campaign Independent Expenditures.' Despite our concerns about the current constitutionality of spending limits, we believe this approach - placing reasonable limits on what PACs can spend - is the right policy.

[LD543](#): This bill - which bans 'self-dealing' or candidates from paying themselves for services out of PACs that they run - was voted out of



Legislative Update 2017: 2

committee 'Ought to Pass' 8-0. PACs were never intended – and should not be permitted – to function as a discretionary fund for the unrestricted personal benefit of one person. We're pleased to see unanimous, bipartisan support for this measure!

Ongoing priorities: MCCE is fighting back on efforts to underfund Clean Elections, eliminate funding in gubernatorial races, and pass harmful amendments to the statute. We continue to wait for [LD300](#), which would eliminate the gubernatorial program from the Clean Election statute, to come for a full vote. We strongly oppose this attempt by Clean Elections opponents to undermine our law. This bill could come to the House for a full vote at any time.

We are also still waiting for a committee work session on [LD413](#) - The bill to prohibit contributions from lobbyists to candidates and lawmakers. See our testimony [here](#), and Senator Justin Chenette's Op-Ed [here](#). There is still time to contact the VLA committee members and express your support for the bill.

Coming this week

Today, the VLA committee is hearing testimony on several bills, including an attempt to eliminate 24-hour reporting. These reports filed by campaigns in the last days before an election give voters important information about who is funding the candidates and issues on the ballot. MCCE strongly opposes [LD1033](#). See our testimony [here](#), and an AP story on this bill [here](#).

You can see all the bills coming up before Veterans and Legal Affairs, and listen to live audio from hearings [here](#).

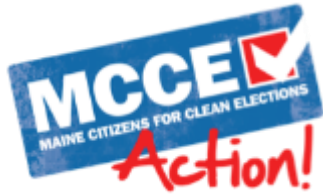
What can you do?

If you have...

5 minutes: Have you contacted your legislator yet and asked them to vote NO on LD300? This bill, which tries to eliminate Clean Elections for gubernatorial candidates - could come up for a vote at any time. You can find your legislators and their phone numbers [here](#). Let me know when you contact them, and any response you receive!

30 minutes: [Contact the VLA committee](#) in support of LD413. See more information about the bill [here](#).

A few hours: Come lobby in Augusta! We are happy to have volunteers join us in Augusta to talk to lawmakers in person! On Tuesdays, MCCE staff are in Augusta working on Clean Election issues, and again on Thursdays,



Legislative Update 2017: 2

lobbying with Ranked Choice Voting. [Let us know](#) if you are interested in joining us on any day!

Keep on your calendar

April 13 - Solemn Occasion Oral Argument

Last month, the Maine Senate invoked the “solemn occasion” provision of the Maine constitution, which asked for a court review of the Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) law. The League of Women Voters of Maine and MCCE [filed a brief](#) with the Maine Supreme Judicial Court arguing that no solemn occasion exists and affirming the opinions of constitutional scholars and experts that RCV is fully constitutional. [Read more here.](#) Oral arguments will occur on April 13, and an advisory decision is expected later in April. Maine people created this law, and it should be implemented, just like every other new law. On the 13th, we plan to fill the courthouse with Maine people who support immediate implementation of the Ranked Choice Voting law, and then head over to the legislature to lobby for the bill. Oral arguments will be heard in the historic ceremonial Courtroom 7 at 8:30 AM. Supporters are encouraged to arrive by 8:00 AM to secure limited seating. Please give yourself an extra 10 minutes to make it through security.

April 23 - Stronger Democracy Volunteer Convention

On Sunday, April 23rd, 9:30-3:30 MCCE supporters from around the state will gather in Waterville to build stronger advocacy, organizing and communication skills, and discuss what comes next for Maine's democracy. Meet activists from around the state and learn about the strategies and tactics that make change as we build our 'citizen's toolkit!' [Click here to register.](#)

Anna Kellar, Program Director

PS - If you had this message forwarded to you, and would like to receive Rapid Response Team messages in the future, you can [sign up here.](#)