

Legislative Update 2017: 3

Rapid Response Team
April 3, 2017

Welcome to the third 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!

Hope you enjoyed the April Fool's snow (and that it is swiftly melting)!

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...

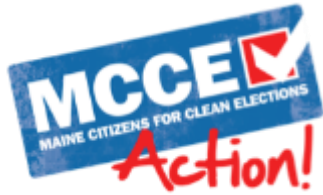
We continue to churn through bills, while keeping our eyes on the big picture fights to preserve Clean Elections and roll back special interest influence.

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

LD1033: last Monday, the Veterans and Legal Affairs committee heard testimony on several campaign finance 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](#).

Ongoing priorities: No news for now on two of our biggest priorities – defeating LD300 and securing full funding for Clean Elections, and banning lobbyist contributions. We continue to wait for [LD300](#), which would eliminate the gubernatorial program from the Clean Election statute, to come in front of the legislature for a full vote. We strongly oppose this attempt by Clean Elections opponents to undermine our law. 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 your lawmakers on these bills!

Coming this week



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This week is a quiet one, all the better to prepare for two big events coming next week.

First, next Monday, April 10th, the last of MCCE's priority bills is coming up for its public hearing: [LD1211: An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Legislative Political Action Committees](#). This bill would ban legislators from controlling their own so-called 'leadership' PACs. Maine voters set low contribution limits for privately-financed candidates, because they don't want any one individual or special interest to have too much influence over their representatives. When legislators maintain their own PACs, taking unlimited contributions from any source, it's a mockery of those contribution limits, and ignores what Maine people want to see from their leaders. We excited to stand with Senator Ben Chipman and co-sponsors to support LD1211.

Then, on Thursday April 13th, the Maine Supreme Court will hear oral arguments on the solemn occasion request on Ranked Choice Voting. See below for more information on this important event.

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

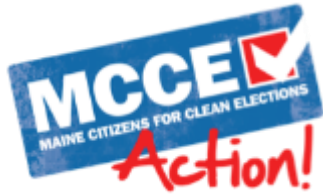
What can you do?

If you have...

5 minutes: Contact your legislator and tell them to vote no on **LD1033**. Transparency and disclosure are important parts of our democracy, and this bill would leave voters in the dark. You can find your legislators and their phone numbers [here](#). Let me know when you contact them, and any response you receive!

30 minutes: Write a Letter to the Editor in support of Ranked Choice Voting. With the solemn occasion oral arguments coming up, it is all the more important that positive messages about Ranked Choice Voting and the ways it will improve our elections and politics get into the public debate. [Click here to sign up to write a letter.](#)

A few hours: Come testify on LD1211 next Monday in Augusta! Do you feel that legislators shouldn't be able to avoid contribution limits, or spend special interest money on favors for their friends? We need your voice in support of LD1211 at 10am Monday April 10th. We're happy to help with testimony – [click here to let us know you can join us.](#)



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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. Sign up here to let us know you'll be joining us!

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.](#)