

Letters to the Editor: Weekly Issue of March 29, 2010

Readers write in about Maine's clean election law and seahorses in trouble.

April 5, 2010

Maine's an example

I agree with your March 8 editorial "Look to the states," that Washington should look to the states to find solutions to political problems. You described many in the accompanying article, "While Congress dickers, states govern."

An important initiative escaped your survey. Here in Maine we enacted a clean elections law, which allows political candidates to choose publicly funded campaigns for office instead of getting mired down with fundraising and the sense of indebtedness to special interests that often follows from that. Our system has worked extremely well and has bipartisan support. A substantial majority of Maine's Legislature now uses clean elections funding, and accepts the spending limits that are part of the system. In a recent poll, 74 percent of Maine's population stated their belief that the candidates for governor should choose that means for funding their campaigns.

Congress has before it the Fair Elections Now Act, S. 752, introduced by Senators Durbin and Specter, which would apply that system to congressional elections.

A companion bill is pending in the House, H.R. 1285. That approach is needed more than ever now, following the recent Supreme Court decision striking down the McCain-Feingold law restricting corporate spending on elections.

Cushman D. Anthony
Former state representative
North Yarmouth, Maine