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[Editorial: Maine's \\$5 election plan](#)

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It's a bit cumbersome, especially at the start of someone's campaign, but Maine's "clean elections" law is making politics there more widely reflect the general will of the public, as opposed to that of special interests.

The system, described in a March 27 Boston Globe story "Maine blazes path in funding," by Sasha Issenberg, involves having citizens wanting this or that candidate pay \$5 to a state government fund set up for candidates.

Candidates for governor who reach a goal of \$16,250, from 3,250 in individual contributions (cash, check or money order), can then ultimately, depending on their success in the primary elections, become eligible for from \$400,000 to as much as \$1.8 million in public funds. It's a stepped process from primary to general election. Once candidates get those funds, they aren't supposed to take money from other, private donors.

Ms. Issenberg reports that since it can be time-consuming and otherwise difficult to raise all those small individual amounts, candidates are allowed to finance those fund-raising campaigns by "collecting up to \$200,000 in 'seed money' from contributions of \$100 or less but have to shut down such accounts at the time they qualify for public money."

Many of these contributions are raised at candidates' speaking events, where they ask people to each pay \$5 into the aforementioned account.

The system creates a sense of admirable civic engagement — it reminds people that anyone can be a "campaign contributor" and encourages candidates, if they reach the minimum of \$16,250 to qualify, to spend more time on issues rather than on asking people for money. Other states should watch the Maine experience carefully.