

BANGOR DAILY NEWS

Letter to the Editor

March 12, 2012

Cushing is wrong

Rep. Andre Cushing, a longtime foe of Maine's citizen-initiated clean election system, has his facts wrong in his March 6 Op-Ed article.

After a court struck down the matching funds system — a part of the law that allowed candidates who faced big-spending opponents to be heard — the nonpartisan Ethics Commission came up with a good alternative. It is the “requalifying option” that would allow candidates in these tough races to receive funds to supplement their modest clean election distributions if they pass an additional threshold of support from local voters.

Cushing is dead wrong about the cost of this program and the size of distributions to candidates. It is a budget-neutral proposal that caps the amount that any candidate may receive at a lower amount than under the matching funds system.

The Legislature should strengthen clean elections by passing this common sense reform. Rep. Cushing is one of the 20 percent of candidates who still rely on private donations to fund his campaigns, and he usually raises more than anyone else. That is his choice.

But in advocating for weakening our first-in-the-nation clean election System, Cushing now wants to take away a choice that has been proven to be good for the 80 percent who prefer to say no to special interests.

Weakening clean elections is a bad choice for Maine.

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