

Portland Press Herald

Letters to the editor, May 23, 2012 Support Clean Election system, reader urges

I don't know about you, but I expect my elected officials to be accountable to their constituents, people like me, not special interests. Maine has long been a leader in getting big money out of politics, with its landmark Clean Election referendum just over 10 years ago.

Clean Election has been under attack since that time by those threatened by its very existence. Unfortunately, the matching fund provisions of the Arizona Clean Election law struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court negated part of Maine's law. And during this legislative cycle, the Legislature was unable to find common ground in finding a way to provide funding for Maine Clean Election candidates running against privately funded candidates. Meaning that privately funded candidates can receive unlimited financial support, which can have very real effects on the outcome of elections.

I am always proud to "check yes" for Clean Election on my tax returns and donate \$5 qualifying contributions to local candidates. I feel these candidates are more responsive to the needs of their constituents and districts and in touch with the challenges facing them because they are out in the field knocking on doors and talking to voters. It is the way things should be. Local representatives who know your name, how your family is doing and who are invested in their community.

As we move into this election year, I urge you to make sure that Clean Election and PAC reform are top priorities of the candidates seeking elected office in your district. Until we get big money out of politics, we're never going to be able to get back to issues that really matter in our communities. We need elected officials who represent people, and the Clean Election system in Maine is an excellent example of that here in our home state.

Tracie Reed

Portland