

Portland Press Herald

December 28, 2012

Another View: Strengthen Clean Election Act to defend against outside money

Our elections will be distorted by a flood of unregulated special-interest spending.

By CHRIS McCOY

Your Dec. 26 editorial "Our View: Outside groups distort campaign financing" was dead on.

Outside special-interest groups raise real problems for democracy. Citizens need to step up to be heard.

The First Amendment belongs to all of us, not just the billionaires funding outside spending.

Right now, regular Americans can exercise their free speech rights, but unless they've won the lottery or run a hedge fund, few people will hear them.

We need to elevate the voices of all people in our democracy through citizen-led elections.

In Maine, the voice of the mill worker should be heard just as clearly as the voice of the CEO of the company that owns the mill where he works.

We can do this by strengthening the Maine Clean Election Act so we can ensure that candidates spend time courting everyone, not just those at the top who can write large checks.

Maine was the first state to pass a clean election law, and citizens led the way.

Our people will lead again, pushing to close loopholes created by the special interests, increase transparency, strengthen Clean Elections, and overturn dangerous court precedents such as Citizens United.

We are leading the way to preserve our landmark Clean Election system, to build on this history of reducing the influence of big special-interest money, and to continue to put Maine voters first.

Chris McCoy is a resident of Portland.