

Get big money out of campaigns

Letters | Thursday, May 17, 2012

This is in response to "The money trail" (May 6), about the financing of U.S. Senate campaigns.

It is interesting that the money trail predominantly leads right out of Maine for four of the candidates. The stark reality is that Maine's elections can be "bought" by people/corporations "from away."

How fortunate we are to have the Maine Clean Election Act, a voluntary program of full public financing of legislative/gubernatorial political campaigns.

I think Mainers believe in fundamental fairness. Unfortunately, the matching funds provisions of the Arizona Clean Elections law was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court, also negating part of Maine's law.

Legislative compromise to find a way to provide more funding for a Maine Clean Election candidate running against a privately funded candidate was not reached. That is a shame, because privately funded candidates can receive unlimited financial support "from away," drastically affecting the vote.

Mainers don't want their Legislature passing laws dictated by a political agenda "from away."

With 70 percent of the legislators funded by the Maine Clean Election Law in 2010, the party in power chose not to find a way to allow matching funding, despite recent state polling showing widespread support for it and for campaign finance reform. This effect resulted in 38 percent of legislative candidates running privately financed campaigns that will have large amounts of money "from away."

We must get big money out of political campaigning in Maine and federally.

The astronomical amount of money being spent nationally, and in Maine, to influence voters is unconscionable and a crying shame.

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