

## [Another View: Mainers, legislators have chance to make Clean Elections work](#)

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By ALISON SMITH

Here at Maine Citizens for Clean Elections, we agree with you about Maine Clean Elections. It is exactly the "common-sense, nonpartisan reform, enacted by the people of Maine" that you describe in your March 17 editorial (["Our View: Maine Clean Elections should be preserved"](#)).

It's worth reflecting why, despite many challenges, it works. It works thanks to Maine people's active participation. Mainers have encouraged candidates to use Clean Elections since the option was first available.

To help get campaigns off the ground, thousands of citizens make \$5 qualifying contributions. Since 2002 the majority of legislative candidates have used Clean Elections, and each and every one relied solely on voters in their district for success. Over seven election cycles, hundreds of thousands of these \$5 donations have been made.

And each year at tax time, Mainers have another chance to make Clean Elections work. Line 1 on the Maine income tax form is the Clean Election check-off. Checking the box won't raise the tax bill or reduce the refund. It allows Mainers to direct \$3 into the Maine Clean Election Fund.

Over the years, Mainers have contributed more than \$2 million to Clean Elections just from this check-off. It's one more way Mainers have done their part to make Clean Elections work.

The Legislature has the chance to strengthen Clean Elections this year by replacing an important component that was lost in a court challenge. But opponents of Clean Elections, including Gov. LePage, want to eliminate this citizen-initiated program. If they are successful, Clean Elections will not be available in 2014.

This year, after checking the Clean Election box on your 1040ME, contact your senator and representative. Tell them you support Clean Elections and have done your part to make it work.

Ask them to do theirs by strengthening and fully funding Clean Elections.

*Alison Smith of Portland is president of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections.*