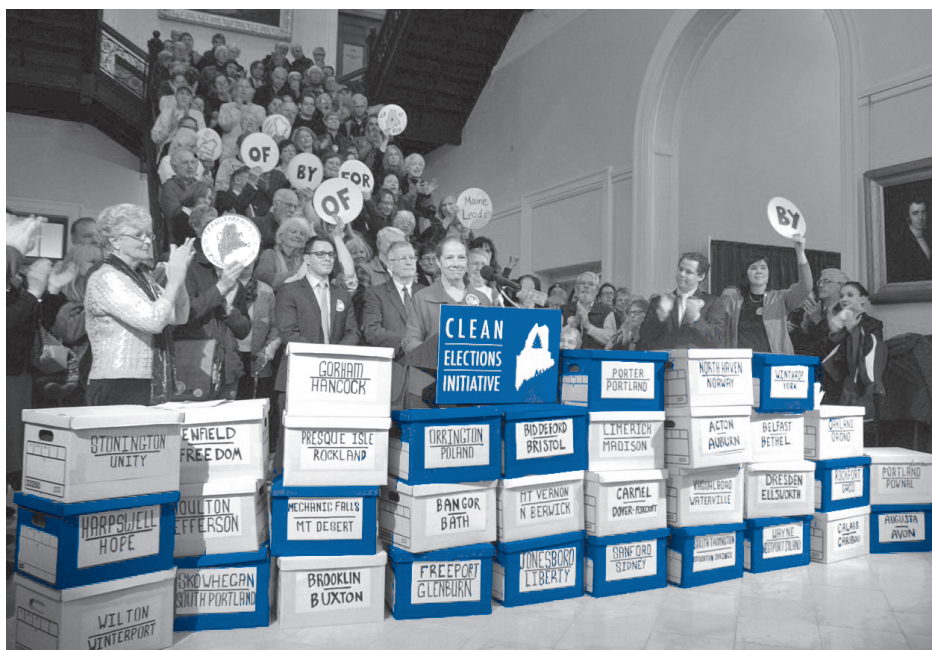


# Maine Clean Elections News

P.O. Box 18187, Portland, ME 04112

[www.mainecelelections.org](http://www.mainecelelections.org)

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Ann Luther rallies supporters at the State House before the group delivered more than 85,000 signatures to the Secretary of State.

## Clean Elections Initiative on the Ballot this November!

All of us at MCCE are so impressed by and grateful for the 1,000 terrific volunteers who made this possible.

Many of you came to the State House on January 21<sup>st</sup> to mark the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the notorious ruling in *Citizens United v. FEC*. We didn't complain about the way things are. We took a concrete step toward making things better by submitting hundreds of Initiative petitions to the Secretary of State.

On those petitions were

the signatures of 86,000 Maine voters, all calling for more transparency, more accountability, and a restoration of our landmark Clean Election law.

This initiative is truly an effort of, by, and for Maine people. When the Supreme Court damaged our citizen-initiated law, and the Maine Legislature failed to repair it, Maine people stepped up.

When *Citizens United* allowed a flood of dark money spending to deluge Maine elections, Maine

people stepped up.

When the governor vetoed legislation to shine a light on post-election fundraising for transition and inaugural expenses, Maine people stepped up.

When penalties and fines proved to be too low to deter violations of campaign finance laws, and the legislature refused to raise them, Maine people stepped up.

Now that the Secretary of State has confirmed that we exceeded the threshold for qualification, and now

## National Spotlight: Rare Victory for Reformers at the Supreme Court

In a surprising 5-4 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a Florida law banning judicial candidates from soliciting money for their election campaigns is constitutional. "The spectacle of lawyers or potential litigants directly handing over money to judicial candidates should be avoided if the public is to have faith in the impartiality of its judiciary," wrote Chief Justice John Roberts in the decision of *Williams-Yulee v. Florida Bar*.

The ruling reveals a disconnect between the Court's view of judicial and other elections. Measures to protect the independence of the judiciary are not controversial. But the Court sees executive and legislative elections differently. Roberts explains, "Politicians are expected to be appropriately responsive to the preferences of their supporters. Indeed, such responsiveness is key to the very concept of self-governance through elected officials. The same is not true of judges."

"... responsive to the preferences of their supporters"—you read that right. No wonder this court has rolled back numerous laws aimed at reducing the influence of big donors.

The dissenting justices, Kennedy, Scalia, Alito, and Thomas, objected to special treatment of judicial campaigns, citing familiar free speech concerns. "The First Amendment," Justice Scalia wrote, "is not abridged for the benefit of the Brotherhood of the Robe."

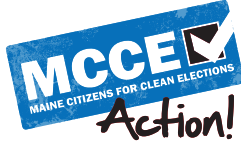
In reform circles, there is much speculation about the meaning of the ruling. Is it an opening for future arguments in campaign finance cases, since the Court acknowledged that campaign contributions might risk favoritism? Or does it simply show that justices are more likely to view the elections of fellow judges as unique, and the integrity of their branch of government more important to protect?

The case will have a limited effect on Maine, since most judges are appointed, not elected. ■

**Initiative** (continues page 2)



Maine Citizens for Clean Elections is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating and engaging the public on matters of money in politics and campaign finance law, and to encouraging citizens to participate in our electoral system and in government to make ours a more politically responsive democracy.



MCCE Action works in the public interest to advocate for, increase public support for, defend and improve the Maine Clean Election Act and related campaign finance law.

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**Peter Dutton**

## Building the MCCE/MCCE Action Team

As we work to strengthen the voices of everyday people in our government, we are also growing our team! Allow me to introduce our new board members, staff, and interns.

We are delighted to welcome former State Senator Ed Youngblood (R-Penobscot) of Brewer to our Board of Directors. Ed was a pioneering Clean Election candidate in 2000, served three terms in the Maine Senate, and two terms on the Ethics Commission. We are also pleased that Emma Halas-O'Connor, Coalition and Grassroots Advocacy Coordinator at the Environmental Health Strategy Center, has joined our board. Both Ed and Emma are committed advocates who bring valuable experience and perspective to our work.

MCCE's new Operations Manager is Robin Dayton of Old Orchard Beach. Robin is a community volunteer and former town councilor with significant professional operations experience. She is already making a big difference in our office.

We recently said good-bye to intern Alex Eisenhauer, a student at the University of

Southern Maine. Alex was a huge help over the past few months.

This summer brings us five new student interns from across the country. Three of them will join us thanks to the Democracy Fellows Program at Harvard University. Mitchell Kilborn is from Omaha, Nebraska and attends Princeton University; Cameron Fegers is from Fort Lauderdale, Florida and goes to Columbia University; and Peter Dutton lives right here in Portland and is a student at Brown University. Joining us through our own Marion Holshouser Money in Politics Internship Program are Lydia Cox from Roanoke College and Julianne McLaughlin from the University of Maine at Farmington.

MCCE and MCCE Action are stronger thanks to this growing team and you. Onward!



**Andrew Bossie**  
*Executive Director*

**ANDY**

### **Initiative** (from page 1)

that the Legislature has indefinitely postponed the bill, the Clean Elections Initiative is assured a place on the November 3<sup>rd</sup> ballot.

Now it's time to hit the campaign trail and ensure victory in November!

MCCE Action has already teamed up with a broad coalition of Mainers and organizations to form the grassroots campaign called Mainers for Accountable Elections, in support of this initiative. And, we've hired Alex Youn, a veteran of many campaigns, to lead it.

"This is the most important campaign I've ever worked on," said Alex when he began his job this spring. "Not enough people are working on the fundamental issue of reducing the influence of big money in our elections and government. Here in Maine, it is regular



**Executive Director Andrew Bossie revs up the crowd at the Augusta signature delivery event.**

citizens who are making a difference. It is an honor to be here to help."

You can help, too! To help pass the Clean Elections Initiative, sign up at [www.accountableelections.org](http://www.accountableelections.org)! ■

**SIGN UP AT [www.accountableelections.org](http://www.accountableelections.org)**



## Questionable Benefit from Expensive Tax Giveaway Program

A recent exposé by journalist Whit Richardson in the Portland Press Herald (*Payday at the Mill, April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015*) provides a compelling reminder of the continuing problem of money in politics and how it jeopardizes the public's confidence in state policymaking.

No policy arena is more important to Maine than economic development. The stakes are high, as state leaders attempt to address the smoldering crisis of shuttered workplaces and falling employment.

Persistent economic concerns, political desperation, and a bevy of unscrupulous operatives make for regrettable public policy. Add fistfuls of campaign cash and the danger escalates. The result is a political system run amok, with no accountability and little benefit to show for the use of millions of dollars out of the Maine General Fund.

The amount of money at stake is very large. The \$16 million Maine taxpayers paid for just one of these projects—the Cate Street Capital project tied to the mill in East Millinocket—would have funded the entire current Maine Clean Election system from 2016 through the 2022 election cycle.

Millworkers worked hard to earn their pay, but “lost their jobs and their way of life” at the mill. Meanwhile “investors” treated Maine as their personal “piggy bank”—in the words of the PPH. They exploited Maine’s pain by subverting good policy with nicely packaged but incomprehensible legislative proposals.

This “morass of financial mumbo-jumbo” was facilitated by \$16,000 in campaign contributions from the firms at the center of the controversy—Cate Street Capital, Advantage Capital Management, and

Stonehenge Capital. All three firms are located outside Maine, and none made contributions in Maine until shortly before the New Markets tax credit program was introduced in the legislature.

One of the firms contributed \$3,000 for Governor Paul LePage’s reelection, including a payment of \$2,000 on November 23, 2012—less than a month before the crucial vote of the Finance Authority of Maine to approve the project.

In addition to the \$16 million tax refund, investors in Katahdin Paper have received approximately \$2.4 million from Maine taxpayers as incentives for owning business equipment at the mill.

It is impossible to know how much out-of-state financiers are costing Maine taxpayers for similar projects or whether those programs have benefit.

Payout for One Failed Project Would Have Funded Clean Elections Through Four Election Cycles

### \$16 Million



Payments to financiers for one failed project

Clean Elections funding 2016 through 2022

But we do know that \$16,000 spent on campaign contributions in Maine brought these investors significant financial return. To read MCCE’s Money in Politics Reports, go to [www.mainecelelections.org/mip](http://www.mainecelelections.org/mip) ■

## Visitors from Afghanistan Learn About Clean Elections

It’s not every day that MCCE’s educational work goes international. In April, Anna Kellar, MCCE’s Southern Maine Organizer, addressed a delegation of government officials from Afghanistan, who travelled to Maine as part of the State Department’s International Visitors Program. Anna explained the history and impact of the Maine Clean Election Act and how MCCE works to promote

accountability in elections. The delegation had many questions about ways for civil society organizations and independent citizens to make local and state government more transparent.

“It was inspiring to learn about many Afghans’ commitment to developing their democracy, despite the challenges of violence and corruption,” Anna said. “I was glad to share stories from Maine, and discuss how,



The Afghani delegation with MCCE’s Anna Kellar (center)

even in an advanced democracy, we still have to fight for the right of everyday voters to have their voices heard.” Anna studied emerging democracies in college, founding the Yale Afghanistan

Forum while an undergrad at Yale University.

The meeting was organized by the World Affairs Council of Maine. ■

**MCCE is a proud member of MaineShare. Support our work through payroll giving.**

**MaineShare**





## Of, By, For **Matching Gift Challenge!**

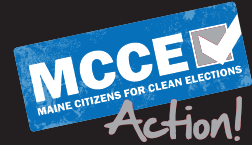
Thanks to a group of generous donors, every donation made to MCCE Action in the month of June will be matched, dollar for dollar!

Grassroots campaigns need grassroots donors, and your donation of any size will give MCCE Action a doubly big boost this month. Please take advantage of this terrific opportunity!

**DOUBLE YOUR DONATION** by sending a check or visiting us online no later than June 30th. It's about keeping Maine elections and government of, by, and for Maine people. Thanks for your help!

You may also use your phone to make a donation. Call us at 207-831-MCCE (6223) with your credit card handy, and say you want to double your money to MCCE Action!

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