



MAINE CLEAN ELECTIONS NEWS

P.O. Box 18187, Portland, ME 04112

www.maineclipselections.org

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123RD LEGISLATURE STRENGTHENS CLEAN ELECTIONS

Raising the bar. In a series of moves to make a good system better, the 123rd Legislature made important changes to the Maine Clean Election Act. Most significant is a 30 percent increase in the number of Qualifying Contributions required for gubernatorial candidates. This change will help ensure that Clean Election funds continue to go only to strong, viable candidates who have broad support among Maine constituents. In 2006, three general election candidates received public funding: Chandler Woodcock (R), Pat LaMarche (G), and Barbara Merrill (U). John Baldacci (D) and Phillip Napier (U) ran privately funded campaigns. Several other candidates failed to qualify for public funds and subsequently dropped out of the race.

Preserving the integrity of the system. The legislature enacted a ban on paying family members with Clean Election funds. Additional measures strengthen the Ethics Commission's enforcement. They now have clear authority to decertify candidates for serious infractions, and new protections are in place to verify qualifying contributions. All gubernatorial candidates will be audited and will start their campaigns with clearer expecta-



MCCE leaders meet with Senator Olympia Snowe regarding the Fair Elections Now Act. Left to right: Arn Pearson, Ann Luther, Senator Snowe, Alison Smith, and John Rauh of Americans for Campaign Reform.

tions for reporting. The legislature also moved Clean Elections into the Information Age by permitting candidates to accept Qualifying Contributions over the Internet.

Securing the future. The supplemental budget included language to restore funds to the Clean Election Fund in time for the 2010 election. These funds were previously "borrowed" and used for other state programs.

MCCE was disappointed that the Legislature failed to take up PAC reform in a meaningful way. As we gear up for the 124th Legislature, our focus is on fully funding the 2010 election cycle, advancing PAC reform, and ensuring the continued viability of the system. We rely on Maine citizens to contact their legislators when important bills are debated during the session and encourage you to sign up for our email action network today.

Sign up at:
www.maineclipselections.org

CLEAN ELECTIONS POISED TO GO FEDERAL

In his State of the Union message in 1907, President Teddy Roosevelt called for public financing of elections. One hundred years later, the United States Senate has before it the Fair Elections Now Act (FENA), modeled on Maine's successful Clean Election system.

When presenting the bill, sponsor Senator Durbin (D-IL) said, "Senators are spending more and more time each year when they are up for reelection creating these trust funds for wealthy broadcasting corporations instead of doing the work the voters sent us here to do. This is not good for our democracy. Our democracy cannot afford to let this system continue."

Reformers and activists all over the country are pointing to Maine as a beacon of hope as they lobby their senators to sign on to FENA. Cosponsored by Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), the bill provides public funds to qualified candidates for U.S. Senate who agree to limit their spending. As in Maine's system, candidates will collect \$5 Qualifying Contributions from voters in order to demonstrate significant grassroots support. A companion bill has been introduced in the House.

(FEDERAL continued on pg. 2)

Maine Citizens for Clean Elections is a coalition of groups and individuals that exists to advocate for, increase public support for, defend and improve the Maine Clean Election Act and related campaign finance law.

**Steering Committee
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League of Women Voters
of Maine

Alison Smith

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AARP Maine

Maine AFL-CIO

Maine Council of Churches

Maine Women's Lobby

NAACP Portland

Peace Action Maine

(FEDERAL continued from pg. 1)

The goals of FENA are to enhance American democracy by:

- Eliminating perceived conflicts of interest created by private campaign contributions
- Restoring confidence in the integrity of electoral and legislative processes
- Increasing public confidence that senators are accountable to their constituents
- Eliminating access to wealth as a prerequisite for running for office
- Reversing the skyrocketing cost of elections
- Saving taxpayers the cost of special interest legislation
- Leveling the playing field to encourage real competition between incumbents and an expanded pool of challengers
- Ending the money chase so that senators can do the work they were elected to do

Since going into effect here in Maine, the Clean Election system has proven popular with both voters and candidates. Eighty-four percent of the current legislature was elected using the system, and a recent poll underscores strong public support. Some of the demonstrated changes include: more candidates, especially women candidates; fewer uncontested races, thus more choices for voters; unparalleled parity between incumbents and challengers; and a flattening of growth in campaign spending.

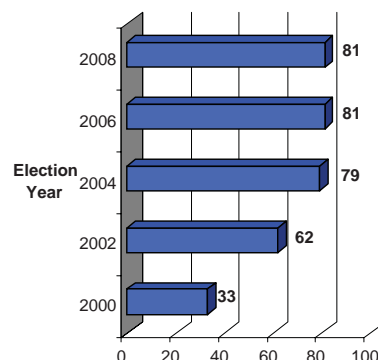
Maine has largely cut the connection between private money and public office, reducing the influence of special interests in our legislative process. Campaigns

mean spending time with voters, not donors. After the election, the only debt is to voters.

While based largely on Maine's model, FENA includes some provisions uniquely appropriate to federal races. Since 52 cents of every campaign dollar in congressional races is spent on broadcast advertising, FENA provides media vouchers in addition to the grants of public funds. A small-spectrum use fee on commercial broadcasters amounting to a small fraction of broadcasters' enormous profits will fund these vouchers. Public funding grants to candidates will be paid for by a fee levied on the upcoming auction of the public spectrum.

Twelve years after passage of the Maine Clean Election Act, Mainers are once again in a position to lead. We must keep our program strong through rigorous monitoring, evaluation, and advocacy. Our immediate challenge is to ensure the 2010 legislative and gubernatorial races are fully funded. We must also encourage our Congressional delegation to take the lead in cosponsoring FENA (see page 4). Please join our email action network at www.maineclipselections.org to help with these efforts.

**Ten Years of
Clean Elections**



Percent of legislative candidates in general election races using the Clean Election public funding system.

MAINE COMMISSION ON GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS AND ELECTION PRACTICES

The Maine Clean Election Act (MCEA) is the model campaign finance reform law in the country. But passing a good law is only the beginning. Proper enforcement and implementation are critical to success here in Maine, and that's why the Ethics Commission is so important.

The Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices is the independent State agency that administers Maine's campaign finance laws. The staff and five commissioners work year-round, assisting candidates with compliance, taking action when violations occur, ensuring public access to campaign finance reports, and making policy recommendations to the legislature.

Commissioners are appointed for staggered three-year terms and serve no more than two terms. No more than two members may be enrolled in the same political party. The Commission elects the Chair, who serves for two years.

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Commissioners should be "persons of recognized judgment, objectivity, and probity." Appointments to the Commission are made by the governor from a list of nominees provided by legislative leadership. All of the current commissioners are lawyers, former legislators, or both.

Current Ethics Commissioners

Edward M. Youngblood (R) of Bangor, retired bank executive and former State Senator; nominated by Senate Republicans

Francis C. Marsano (R) of Belfast, retired Justice of the Maine Superior Court and former State Representative; nominated by House Republicans

Mavourneen Thompson (D) of Peaks Island, public policy analyst and former State Representative; nominated by Senate Democrats

Walter McKee (D) of Hallowell, a litigator who also serves as president of the Maine Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers; nominated by House Democrats

Michael P. Friedman (U) of Bangor, Chair, private practice attorney; nominated by all caucuses

Commission meetings and hearings are open to the public, and MCCE is there. We are the only group working in the public interest to preserve the MCEA, and we bring a unique perspective to the practical work of enforcing our law.

LETTER FROM THE CO-CHAIRS:

MCCE on the Move

Welcome to this first edition of our newsletter for Maine Citizens for Clean Elections. Let us start with a big "thank you" to the many donors who make our work possible – we are very appreciative of your support.

Our coalition is growing in more ways than one. Last April, we welcomed Jill Ward as the new Program Director for MCCE. Jill's background includes work as a legislative aide for U.S. Senators George Mitchell and Paul Sarbanes, as well as public policy work for Washington D.C.-based non-profit organizations, most recently the Girl Scouts of the USA. A native of Maine and a lawyer, Jill has jumped in with both feet and is already doing a fantastic job.

We are also delighted to welcome several new partners to our coalition: the Maine Council of Churches, NAACP-Portland, Maine Women's Lobby, and the League of Young Voters. Our Steering Committee has also grown to include new at-large members: lobbyist Pam Cahill; public policy consultant Joanne D'Arcangelo; and Arn Pearson, V.P. of Programs at Common Cause.

Everyone on our growing team is dedicated to working in the public interest to protect Maine's landmark campaign finance law for the people of Maine and as a beacon of reform to others around the country. We're glad to have you along, too. We welcome your comments (and donations!) at: info@maineclipselections.org.



Ann Luther, co-chair



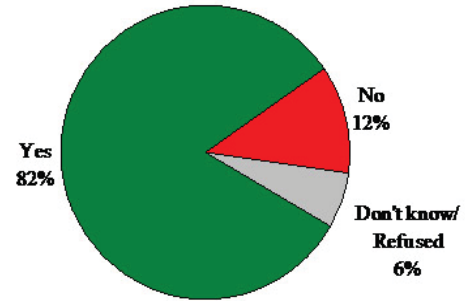
Alison Smith, co-chair

**MAINERS AFFIRM
SUPPORT OF PUBLIC
FINANCING SYSTEM**

Maine citizens affirmed their strong support for the state's public financing system for gubernatorial candidates according to a recent poll commissioned by MCCE. When asked whether candidates for governor should use Maine's Clean Election law, 82 percent of Maine voters polled said "Yes," and 61 percent said they would be "more likely" to vote for a candidate who participates in the program. The citizen-initiated Maine Clean

Election Act has been in effect since 2000 and provides limited public funding to qualified candidates for state office who agree to limit their spending. Eighty-one percent of current legislative candidates are using the Clean Election system. "The poll shows that Maine people value their Clean Election system and the candidates who use it," said Alison Smith, co-chair of MCCE. Poll results were compiled by Critical Insights as part of their Spring 2008 Tracking Survey. A summary report can be found at www.maineclipselections.org.

Do you think candidates for governor should use Maine's Clean Elections law, which provides public campaign funds for candidates who agree to spending limits and accept only small contributions from individuals?



HELP TAKE CLEAN ELECTIONS TO WASHINGTON, DC

The Fair Elections Now Act is Maine-style reform for U.S. Senate and House campaigns. See *Clean Elections Poised to Go Federal* on page 1.

Please contact Maine's Members of Congress TODAY and ask them to cosponsor the Fair Elections Now Act (S. 1285 and H.R. 7022). Tell them you are proud of Maine's pioneering Clean Election system, and that you want the same benefits for the United States Senate and House of Representatives.

Top Priority: Sen. Olympia Snowe	(202) 224-5344 or (800) 432-1599	www.snowe.senate.gov
Sen. Susan Collins	(202) 224-2523	www.collins.senate.gov
Rep. Tom Allen	(202) 225-6116	www.tomallen.house.gov
Rep. Mike Michaud	(202) 225-6306	www.michaud.house.gov

For more information visit www.fairelectionsnow.org



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- Legislature Strengthens Clean Elections
- And *much* more...

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