



Maine Clean Elections News

P.O. Box 18187, Portland, ME 04112

www.mainecelelections.org

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Successful Clean Elections Initiative is Working!

This election cycle has already broken all records for political spending. In Maine, however, we have an encouraging sign: Clean Elections participation is on the rebound!

Sixty-two percent of candidates for Maine legislative office are using Clean Elections to fund their campaigns in this November's general election, a marked increase from 53% in the 2014 election cycle. The election of the 128th Legislature is the first to be held under changes to

the Maine Clean Election Act passed by voters at referendum in 2015.

Not only are more candidates using Clean Elections, but they are using it and winning, even when outspent by their opponents. In June, thirteen State House and State Senate primaries featured a Clean Elections candidate and a privately financed candidate; of those races, 62% were won by the Clean Election candidate.

As one Senate candidate said after winning a contested primary, "Clean Elections is the best way to fund a campaign. You're only beholden to your voters. It's the honest way to run a campaign. Clean Elections won a landslide referendum [because] it's what the people want, and we have to be responsive to that."

The Maine Clean Election Act, the first system of full public financing for state candidates in the country, was passed by Maine

voters at referendum in 1996. Starting in 2000, candidates began using Clean Elections, and it continued to grow in popularity among candidates across the political spectrum. Participation in the program peaked in 2008, when 81% of candidates for legislature opted to run Clean Elections campaigns; that year 85% of elected legislators won their races using Clean Elections.

In recent years, the program has been weakened by a series

A Year Later ... (continues page 2)

MCCE in Demand!

When it comes to democracy, Maine continues to inspire the nation

And, when it comes to Clean Elections, everyone wants what we have—a campaign finance system that puts people first. That's why MCCE is often tapped to share our story.

Our Executive Director, Andrew Bossie, began 2016 with a trip to Arizona to share Maine's recent initiative experience as Arizonans attempt to update their Clean Election law. Andy also made trips to neighboring New Hampshire to advise NH Rebellion, a group organizing to bring Clean Elections to their state. He often travels to Washington D.C. to be a panelist when national groups discuss campaign finance reform. In May, Andy spoke at an event hosted by Third Way, a centrist

think tank, and he was a featured panelist at the September conference of American Promise, an organization that promotes a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United*.

In April, Andy and board member Alison Smith brought an interactive classroom presentation to an array of diverse schools near St. Louis, MO as guests of Civitas, a nonprofit that promotes active citizenship in middle and high schools. In classrooms large and small, several hundred kids learned about the role of money in politics and participated in mock elections as voters and candidates. A public discussion with civic and political leaders about what Missouri can do

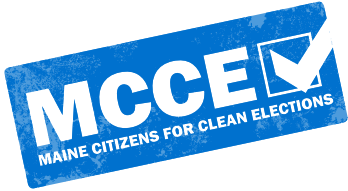


MCCE Board member Alison Smith works with middle school students as they prepare to run for office in a mock election..

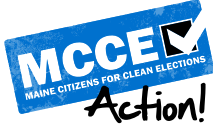
to make progress on campaign finance reform capped off the trip.

Meanwhile, MCCE's field team, led by Program Director

Anna Kellar, continues to hold forums in communities all over Maine—educating, engaging, and inspiring all who participate! ■



Maine Citizens for Clean Elections is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization working to ensure that Maine's campaign finance laws, elections, and government serve the public interest, both in principle and in practice. We engage Maine people from across the political spectrum, using research, education, and outreach to further fairness, inclusion, and opportunity in our politics.



MCCE Action advocates for campaign finance laws, elections, and government that serve the public interest, both in principle and in practice. We support measures that increase fairness, inclusion, and opportunity in our politics and promote robust participation by Maine people in their government.

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Encouraging citizens to take part in their own governance

The work of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections has always been about strengthening our democracy. We have worked to defend, protect, and strengthen the Maine Clean Election system, but we've never stopped there. We've also taken many measures to reduce the role of private special interest money in our elections. We've encouraged the practice of democracy by encouraging citizens to take part in their own governance by voting, advocating for what they believe, and running for office. And, we've conducted research to better understand the way money moves through our political system, public attitudes about elections and campaign finance, and the value of transparency and accountability.

Take a careful look at our mission statements printed on this newsletter's masthead, and you will see that both MCCE and MCCE Action have made some changes that better reflect the "why" of what we do. This is the result of a six-month long strategic planning process that culminated in a recommitment to nonpartisanship, advocacy for Clean Elections, and the promotion of fairness, inclusion, opportunity, and participation in our elections and government. These broader state-

ments of mission are exciting roadmaps as we prepare for the next phase of our work!

Our Marion Holshouser Money in Politics Internship Program continues to thrive, and we are pleased to host two terrific college students this fall: Nicola Feleo, a junior at Bowdoin from New Jersey, and Griffin Clark, a junior at Colby from Rhode Island.

Congratulations to our Board president, Gary Friedmann, for his recent recognition by the Natural Resources Council of Maine for his important grassroots environmental work. In addition to leading MCCE, Gary serves on Bar Harbor's Town Council and as chair of "A Climate to Thrive," an initiative to achieve energy independence for Mount Desert Island by 2030.

Andrew Bossie
Executive Director



ANDY

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A Year Later (from page 1)

of Supreme Court decisions, legislative inaction, and budget raids. As a result, participation in Clean Elections declined. Some candidates feared that using Clean Elections would be a disadvantage and opted to run privately financed campaigns as a result. After repeated failed attempts to restore Clean Elections in the legislature, Maine voters took matters into their own hands once again by qualifying and passing the 2015 Clean Elections Initiative. Increased participation in Clean Elections in 2016 shows that candidates are confident

that they can run competitive, voter-centered campaigns without relying on big-money contributions. The law Maine people came together to pass is working to ensure a government accountable to everyday people.

According to a survey conducted by Maine Citizens for Clean Elections after the June primary, the majority of candidates were very satisfied with their choice of funding and would use Clean Elections again. "It had a tremendously positive impact," said one candidate. "Since I didn't have to focus on fundraising, I could

spend all of that extra time concentrating on more important tasks: namely, knocking on people's doors."

But that's not all our new law is doing. The initiative passed by voters in 2015 is also increasing transparency. The law now requires groups that spend independently to influence legislative races name their top donors on their ads in addition to their name. Voters now have real-time information about outside spending and who's paying for ads and trying to influence their decisions at the ballot box. ■



Private Money in Legislative Elections Declines, Showing Renewed Strength of Clean Elections

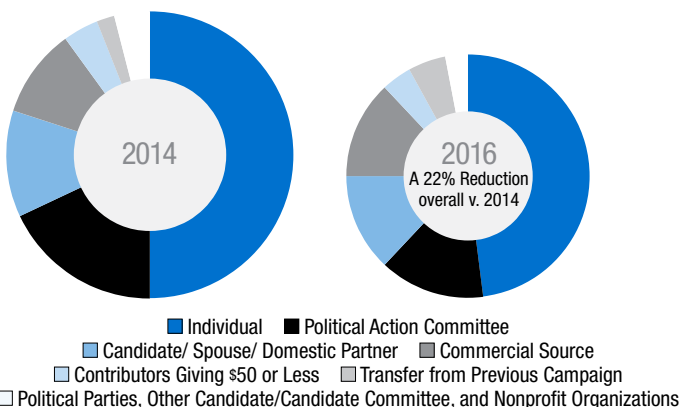
We want our politicians to answer to voters, not their campaign donors. That's why we're pleased to report that as more candidates have chosen to use the strengthened Clean Election option passed by voters in 2015, private money raised by candidates seeking House and Senate seats has fallen 22% from this point in 2014.

Based on reports filed by candidates 42 days before the general election, the \$851,478 in private campaign contributions has fallen from \$1,097,147 raised at the same point in 2014. Sixty-two percent of Maine legislative candidates are using Clean Elections to fund their campaigns in November's general election, a marked increase from 53% in the 2014 election.

Mainers want their elected leaders to be accountable to everyday people in their district, not wealthy special interests that can afford high-priced lobbyists and donors who make big campaign contributions. That's why Maine voters have twice supported Clean Elections at the ballot. Less special interest money in the hands of our elected officials is evidence that our voter-approved Clean Elections Act is working.

MCCE also found that candidates whose campaigns are privately funded depend on their own deep pockets, wealthy individuals and corporations. Most recent reports is evidence that contributions of \$50 or less only made up 7.1% of the 2016 total, down from 8.9% in 2014. Individuals giving more than

Private Contributions to Legislative Candidates as of 42-Day Pre-General Report (2016 v 2014) by Source



\$50 account for 47.8%, with 13.5% from Political Action Committees (PACs), 13.3% from commercial sources, and 12.5% from candidates and their spouses.

Many Mainers struggling to put food on the table, heat their

homes, and stay out of debt can't afford big political contributions. The facts show that under private fundraising they get left out. With Clean Elections, voters that give \$5 are the political players that matter. ■

MCCE in Action!



MCCE Democracy Fellow Kat Chenail gets ready to talk to voters at Kingfield Days.



Andrew Bossie discusses successes in Maine at the American Promise Citizen Leadership Conference in D.C.

Who Funds MCCE? You!

"Who funds MCCE?" we are often asked

As a nonprofit that believes transparency is fundamental to a strong democracy, that's one question we are always proud to answer. MCCE uses multiple streams of revenue to raise the funds that help fulfill our mission.

Each year, we implement a diverse development plan that relies on a broad representation of individual support. This includes a robust annual fund campaign, neighborhood house parties and events, participation in MCCE's Of, By For Advocates monthly donor program, and online campaigns, as well as grant funding from charitable foundations and donor-advised funds.

MCCE is focused on strengthening our democracy, and our new mission reflects that charge. In the interest of transparency, we publish a list of all our donors on our website. We are grateful that more than 2,200 folks supported MCCE last fiscal year, many of whom were also involved in other aspects of our work.

Thank you to all our MCCE friends for your steadfast support! Together, we've chocked up many great accomplishments, and thanks to you, Maine continues a proud 20+-year history leading the country when it comes to money in politics. We hope you join us for the next 20 years! ■

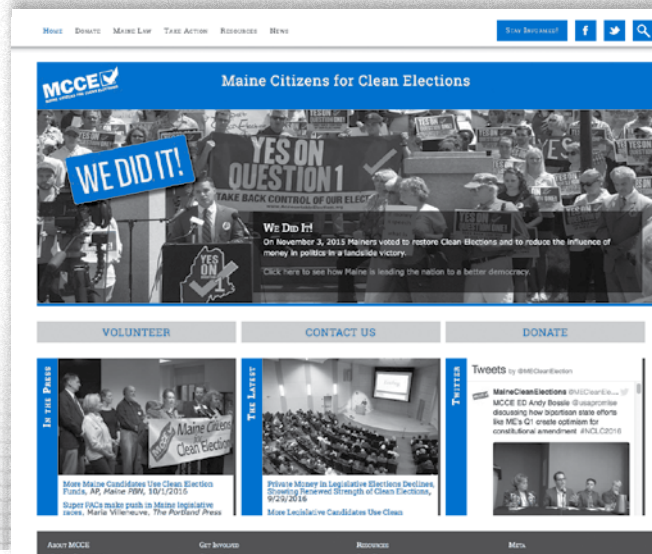
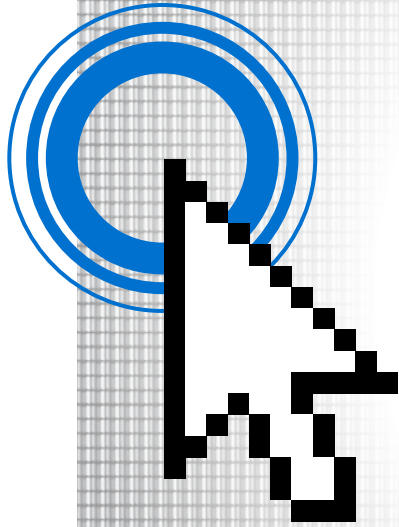
MCCE is a proud member of MaineShare. Support our work through payroll giving.

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MCCE ONLINE

We love sending you our newsletter, but the best way to keep up with **MCCE is online!**

Check out **mcce.me/engage** and sign up on our email list. Join us on social media, too!



Don't miss:

- The latest campaign finance news and opinion from Maine and around the country
- Our monthly e-newsletter, the Clean Election Connection
- Invitations to upcoming events
- Timely action alerts
- MCCE's Money in Politics Report series
- Updates from Augusta
- And MUCH more!

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