



Maine Clean Elections News

P.O. Box 18187, Portland, ME 04112

www.mainecelelections.org

The Newsletter of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections • Vol. 7, Issue 2 • Fall 2014

Momentum Builds for Clean Elections Initiative!

Wanted: 1,000 Maine voters to Devote a Day to Democracy.

Which day? Election Day, November 4th!

That's when MCCE Action! and you will make the final push for signatures to qualify the Clean Elections Initiative for the ballot.

Momentum has been building from the day back in May when we got our long-awaited petitions from the Secretary of State. Hundreds of you have stepped forward to collect signatures from friends, family, and neighbors. You were at the polls on Primary Day, and you brought your petitions to community events from the Fourth of July through Labor Day and into the fall.

More than 28 organizations have endorsed the Clean Elections Initiative, and that number is growing.

From good government and reform groups to civil rights advocates and environmental and social justice organizations, this impressive list demonstrates both the importance of our effort and the breadth of our support. So many Mainers have a stake in Clean Elections. Everyone wants to strengthen this first-in-the-nation law from the damage done by the courts, and they want to increase both transparency and accountability in our campaign finance laws.

The time is right for the Clean Elections Initiative. The policy is strong, the need is great, and momentum is gaining.

Now we are poised to conclude our petition drive with a massive Election Day

mobilization. Election Day provides the best opportunity to meet tens of thousands of Maine voters, offer them information and the chance to sign the Clean Elections Initiative petition. In order to seize this opportunity we need volunteers to station themselves at polling places across Maine all day—right until 8:00 p.m. when they close.

In preparation for Election Day, MCCE has hired three full-time organizers and cultivated a growing corps of volunteer leaders. We've also held volunteer trainings across the state and an exciting Telephone Town Hall with special guest Professor Lawrence Lessig. We have recruited several hundred willing workers for Election Day, but we still have shifts to fill. That's where you come in!

Momentum (continues page 3)

Coalition Organizations of the Clean Elections Initiative

Allen Avenue Unitarian Universalist Church	Conservation Alliance
ACLU of Maine	Maine Equal Justice Partners
Brennan Center for Justice	Maine People's Alliance
Common Cause	Maine Small Business Coalition
Democracy for America	Maine Unitarian Universalist State Action Network
Demos	Maine Women's Lobby
Environment Maine	NAACP
Environmental Health Strategy Center	Peace & Justice Center of Eastern Maine
Free Speech for People	People for the American Way
League of Women Voters of Maine	Public Campaign / Every Voice
Maine Center for Economic Policy	Public Citizen
Maine Citizens for Clean Elections / MCCE Action!	Sierra Club Maine
Maine Conservation Voters / Maine	United Steelworkers Maine Labor Council

To add your organization to this growing list, contact info@MaineCleanElections.org



The Race for Governor—Big Money Gets Bigger

Are you troubled by the shortage of large contributions in Maine's gubernatorial election? Neither are we. Nevertheless, in an election cycle already dominated by big money, wealthy donors just won another victory.

In September a federal court ruled that supporters of independent gubernatorial candidate Eliot Cutler could double their campaign contributions. The judge reasoned that since major party candidates can raise

contributions for both the primary and the general election, it would be unfair to Cutler—who had no primary—to deny him the same opportunity.

The state Ethics Commission took that ruling a giant step farther, allowing all contributors to double their contributions to any candidate in the 2014 gubernatorial election.

Thanks to this ruling and earlier efforts to raise contribution limits, the effective limit

this year is \$3,000, a far cry from the \$500 limit enacted by voters in 1996. This happened without the input or consent of the people of Maine.

The rollback of Maine's contribution limits is only the latest chapter in a long history. Earlier, the unholy trilogy of Supreme Court decisions—*Citizens United*, *McComish* and *McCutcheon*—resulted in great victories for big-money special interests, especially for unaccountable organizations making independent expenditures. And in 2012, Maine's governor and legislature suspended

Governor (continues page 2)



MCCE is a nonpartisan organization that 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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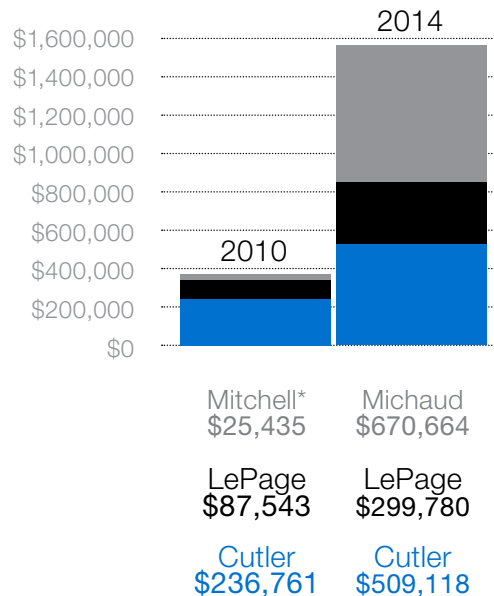
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Harold "Trey" Stewart

Governor (from page 1)

Out-of-state Fundraising by 2014 Gubernatorial Candidates Already Exceeds 2010 Level



*Publicly funded candidate

the Maine Clean Election Act program for gubernatorial candidates.

Maine once proudly claimed the most democratic, grassroots campaigns in the nation. But no one should be surprised that special interest money is now flooding into Maine campaigns like never before.

In January, MCCE predicted that \$26.6 million in private funds would be spent in this election, making it the most expensive in Maine's history. Recent reports confirm that we've entered a whole new era of money in our elections: seven weeks before Election Day, gubernatorial candidate campaigns had already raised more than their 2010 counterparts. And an alarming amount of money is flowing into Maine from wealthy contributors located outside the state.

Big money wins. Again.

The courts and the legislature have let us down. When those entrusted to protect the public interest fail to act on our behalf, the people must make their voices heard. ■

MCCE is committed to reducing the influence of big money while elevating the importance of everyday voters in Maine's elections. We'll continue to monitor, analyze, and report on the money in this year's elections. See our reports at www.maineclipselections.org/mip



Cumberland County volunteers pose for a group photo before heading out to collect signatures for the Clean Elections Initiative.

MCCE in Action



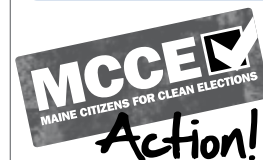
(Above, left) Jeff Clements speaks at MCCE's first Clean Elections Convention in Waterville. (Above, right) Trainings at the convention covered organizing, signature-gathering, and telling our own money-in-politics stories.



Staff celebrates with BJ McCollister (R) after he won the Portland Phoenix's Best Activist award.



MCCE supporters gather in Bar Harbor for a reception with Larry Lessig at the home of Michael Boland and Dierdre Swords in August.



Keep MCCE in Action! Donate online or using the enclosed envelope

MaineShare 25 YEARS
MCCE is a proud member of MaineShare.
 Support our work through payroll giving.
MaineShare.org

Momentum (from page 1)

Can you **Devote a Day to Democracy** on November 4th? Whether you can volunteer for the whole day, a half day, or a couple of hours, we need your help!

We could not be more proud of the enthusiasm and diligence of our growing volunteer corps. From students to retirees, in towns from Caribou to Kittery, and everyone in between, a diverse group of Maine voters is making an enormous effort to make sure that we strengthen Clean Elections, shine the light on dark money, and raise the level of accountability of PACs, candidates, and everyone who spends significant money to influence the outcome of our elections.

Maine needs the Clean Elections Initiative. And, its success rests entirely on Maine voters. Since registered voters are the **ONLY** people eligible to collect signatures, this truly is an effort of, by and for Maine people.

With staff and volunteer leaders working in all 16 Maine counties, we are making great progress lining up signature-gatherers for November 4th.

Be a part of Maine's good-government legacy. Devote a Day—or just a couple of hours—to democracy on Election Day! Let's get this done! ■

To sign up to volunteer go to our website, www.maine-cleanelections.org, or call BJ McCollister at 207-831-6444.

Building the Clean Elections Team

The last few months at MCCE have been all about building our team. We've doubled the size of our staff, brought on three terrific new interns, and increased our outreach efforts. And we welcomed a new board member, Portland attorney and activist Wells Lyons.

The issue of money in politics is in the news every day, especially now that Maine is in the midst of the *most expensive election in its history*. All of the shortcomings of our campaign finance system are on display: the increasing role of private money thanks to a diminished Clean Elections system, more reliance on large donations thanks to higher contribution limits, record outside spending by PACs and groups, and little information for the public about who paid for the political ads flooding the airwaves.

All of this makes our work here at MCCE timely and important. We have built a top-notch team to organize and support the volunteers

who will make our Clean Elections Initiative petition drive a success on Election Day. We held four regional trainings to provide our folks with the tools and information they need for success. We partnered with Maine People's Alliance, Maine Conservation Voters, and the League of Women Voters of Maine to host our first-ever Telephone Town Meeting, and we thank Professor Lawrence Lessig for his inspiring remarks on the call.

We are well on our way to fulfill an ambitious plan to recruit 1,000 volunteers to cover 200 polling places on November 4th. But, we're not there yet!

Everything is in place for success—now, all we need is YOU! Sign up to 'Devote a Day to Democracy' today!

Onward!



ANDY

Andrew Bossie
Executive Director

Share Your Story! When Big Money Calls the Shots ...

If you are reading this article, then you have a story about money in politics. All of us have a unique perspective, and sharing our stories is an important way to elevate our issue, educate ourselves, and reach out to our fellow citizens.

That's why MCCE launched Share Your Story, and we hope you will participate! Share Your Story is a campaign to increase awareness about the price people pay when money dominates politics. It's one way to give voice to the deep concerns about the outsized role that big money plays in elections, and what that means for our everyday lives.

Using the hashtag #CleanElectionsSupporter, a diverse array of Mainers have already shared their stories on Facebook and Twitter. Others have shared their stories by writing Letters to the Editor and Op-Eds in papers throughout Maine. From a young Portland environmental activist who is concerned about toxins in household products and an aspiring nurse in Caribou who deferred her schooling because of the high cost of tuition to a brain cancer survivor worried about companies that fail to disclose potential harm from cell phone radiation, Maine people have made clear that we all pay the price when special interests dominate our elections and government.

Why are you a Clean Elections supporter? How would you finish this sentence? "When Big Money calls the shots..."

Stuart Cobb, a survivor of brain cancer, says, "When big \$ calls the shots, consumers are not protected." Tyler Creighton tweets, "When big \$ calls the shots, my tax dollars pay bonuses

Share Your Story.

Anna Kellar, Falmouth, MCCE's Southern Maine Organizer

"I spent years overseas in emerging democracies and gained deep respect for the courage of ordinary people there. Expats and others working with NGOs would get discouraged, but local activists never gave up. I know the best place for me to be is here in Maine where I wholeheartedly work to strengthen democracy."

Ben Cohen @YoBenCohen

I'm a #CleanElectionsSupporter because big money in politics is the root of injustice. Why are you a Clean Elections Supporter?

Deb Simpson, Auburn, former Maine Senator

"When big money calls the shots, working people lose, especially women. We need more women in politics, and a strong Clean Election Act will help."

on Wall Street instead of helping struggling homeowners."

Check out more stories throughout this newsletter. We all have stories to share, and there is no better way to begin the conversation about money in politics. Developing our own story helps us to connect with others, and listening to their stories enriches our own understanding of the depth and breadth of the problem. The connections we make with friends, colleagues, neighbors and our own families provide a strong foundation for the movement to get big money out of politics and strengthen our citizen-led democracy. ■

Share YOUR Story! Use the hashtag #CleanElectionsSupporter on Facebook or Twitter. Contact us at Info@MaineCleanElections.org or 207-831-6444 about getting a Letter to the Editor in your local newspaper.



Devote a Day to Democracy November 4

Sign up to collect signatures on Election Day



The **Clean Elections Initiative** will strengthen Clean Elections, disclose dark money, and close loopholes for the future.
This is an effort of, by, and for Maine voters.
That's where you come in.

Volunteers are needed in your town! Sign up at **mainecelelections.org** or by calling BJ McCollister at 207-831-6444

SIGN UP TODAY! Visit www.MaineCleanElections.org to sign up to volunteer or donate.

Rethink Democracy @
When big \$ calls the shots, the defense industry convinces Congress to militarize police.
#CleanElectionsSupporter

Kaitlyn Umphrey, Caribou
"When big money calls the shots, higher education becomes unaffordable. I had to drop out of nursing school because of rising tuition, while Sallie Mae donated millions to candidates and made \$5 billion off financial aid interest! We need to get money out of politics so education is affordable to everyone."

Edward Erikson @EdwardErikson
Because I want a government that represents 'We the People,' not special interests.

Share Your Story.

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