



MAINE CLEAN ELECTIONS NEWS

The Newsletter from Maine Citizens for Clean Elections

MAINECLEANELECTIONS.ORG

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Attack on Clean Elections Backfires, MCCE Wins Court Opinion Ordering LePage to Release Funding

On June 27 MCCE and 11 candidates and contributors sued Governor Paul LePage for blocking access to Clean Election funding.

In 18 years of Clean Elections, no governor had ever blocked release of funding. And for good reason—the law does not give the governor that authority.

So MCCE took him to court. And with your support, we won.

Superior Court Justice William Stokes heard arguments in July and issued a ruling on August 2. The decision gave the administration just three days to release the funds.

More important, it set a precedent that the governor cannot block Clean Election funding by withholding approval of a financial order.

MCCE's in-house attorney John Brautigam, along with Melissa Hewey and David Kallin of the law firm of Drummond Woodsum, prepared for an emergency appeal.

But late in the evening of the third day, we received word that the funding would be released. The governor did not file an appeal.

A second momentous funding battle took place in the legislature and before the Ethics Commission. An error in the state biennial budget made it appear that Clean Elections funding would not be dispersed after July 1.

This was a simple typo, but a group of legislators blocked the "errors bill" and thereby threw doubt on the supplemental funding portion of the Clean Election law.

Once again we rallied our forces and demanded the release of funds.



MCCE Program Director Lado talks about Clean Elections with fairgoers at the Common Ground Country Fair.

Armed with the opinion of Justice Stokes, on August 16 we persuaded the Ethics Commission to ignore the error in the budget and release funds to fully qualified candidates.

We did not expect to spend five months fighting for Clean Election funding that had already been appropriated. But the experience was gratifying. From April through August, we received an outpouring of support from candidates, allies, and the general public.

Now, more candidates are using Clean Elections than in the 2016 cycle. That means less special interest money and more accountability. Although another attack could come at any time, Clean Elections ends the year stronger than ever.

Check out our new website for more on using RCV, FAQs, articles, videos, and other resources:

MAINERANKEDCHOICE.VOTE



MCCE Action Endorses Portland Question 2

This November, Portland voters will vote on a referendum to increase campaign finance transparency in municipal elections.

Currently, candidates for city council, school board, and water district are required to disclose their contributions and spending 11 days before the election.

However, by that time, many voters will have already cast early absentee ballots.

Portland's Question 2 would add one additional report 42 days before the election, providing voters with more timely information.

This additional report matches what state-level candidates are required to file.

As Louis Brandeis famously said, "Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants."

At MCCE, we believe in strong disclosure laws because the public has a right to know who is funding elections.

We are proud to endorse Question 2 and encourage Portland voters to vote yes for timely transparency.

A Note From Anna

Political equity. It's both the simplest, and most radical of ideas. Each person's vote, each person's voice, matters just as much as anyone else's - no matter their race, religion, income or education.

Clean Elections puts that principle into practice. In Maine, you don't have to be wealthy to run for office, or to have your elected representative listen to your concerns.

We believe that political equity is worth fighting for. That's why, when the governor attempted to block Clean Elections funding in the middle of this election cycle, we sued. And we won.

Our victory in court means that Maine's Clean Election system is stronger than ever, and we are all the more committed to a democracy in which everyday Mainers are in the driver's seat.

We take being a grassroots, volunteer-driven organization very seriously. Through our Democracy Partnership with the League of Women Voters of Maine, we are building a hub for people who want to engage more deeply with the political process. We are helping to build skills, enhance knowledge, and connect with fellow citizens to strengthen our democracy.

More than ever, there are roles for our supporters to play, whether you join us in Augusta to lobby your legislators, help register new voters, or teach students about civic engagement.

Let's roll up our sleeves and build a government truly of, by and for the people.

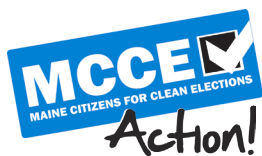


Thanks for building with us.

Anna Kellar, *Executive Director*



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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Fundraising from Lobbyists Accelerates with Late Adjournment

MONEY IN POLITICS

It has become a shameful annual ritual. The moment the legislature adjourns, lobbyists are inundated with fundraising requests from legislative candidates and political action committees.

Under state law, this kind of fundraising is barred until the legislative session concludes.

But the moment the final gavel falls, political operatives let loose hundreds of email messages seeking money from the vested interests who for months have walked the halls of the people's capital building.

MCCE has long opposed this practice. We sought a ban on legislative fundraising from lobbyists, or at least a decent "cooling off period" before the session begins and after it ends.

Legislators have killed the bill on numerous occasions.

This year, in part due to the obstruction of Clean Elections funding, the legislature did not adjourn in April, May or June, like normal, but stayed in session until mid-September.

Therefore, the scramble for lobbyist contributions has taken place in a much shorter period of time before the election, highlighting the scale of the problem.

A future report of our Money in Politics series will detail the fundraising tactics specifically targeting lobbyists and those who fund them.

Democracy Partnership Expands Civic Engagement

MCCE is part of the Democracy Partnership, as we're calling our close collaboration with the League of Women Voters of Maine.

As part of this collaboration, we have been engaging in a broader democracy agenda - voter registration, education, and engagement on a number of issues.

Through our Maine Uses Ranked Choice Voting Project, MCCE and the League reached more than 100,000 Maine voters ahead of the first use of Ranked Choice Voting in a statewide election in June this year.

Through presentations to community groups, online simulations, TV ads and more, we helped ensure Mainers understand how to rank their ballot, and the value of using all their choices.

We were proud the June primary election went off so well and that we were involved in another historic case of Maine leading the nation in democracy reform.

This fall, we are expanding our RCV education work to those who didn't vote in June.




We are also excited to be working together to register voters, distribute more than 75,000 copies of the Easy-to-Read Voter Guide, and increase access to absentee ballots especially in communities with low voter turnout.

The challenges facing our democracy won't be overcome by any one policy or program. Our partnership means we have many ways to put power in the hands of Maine people.



Volunteers display sample ranked choice ballots on Primary Day in Portland.

FIND US ONLINE

-  facebook.com/MaineCleanElections
-  mcce.me/video
-  @MECleanElection

ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY NOVEMBER 6!

We will use **Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)** for races for U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives.

We will **NOT** use RCV to vote for Governor or State Legislature.

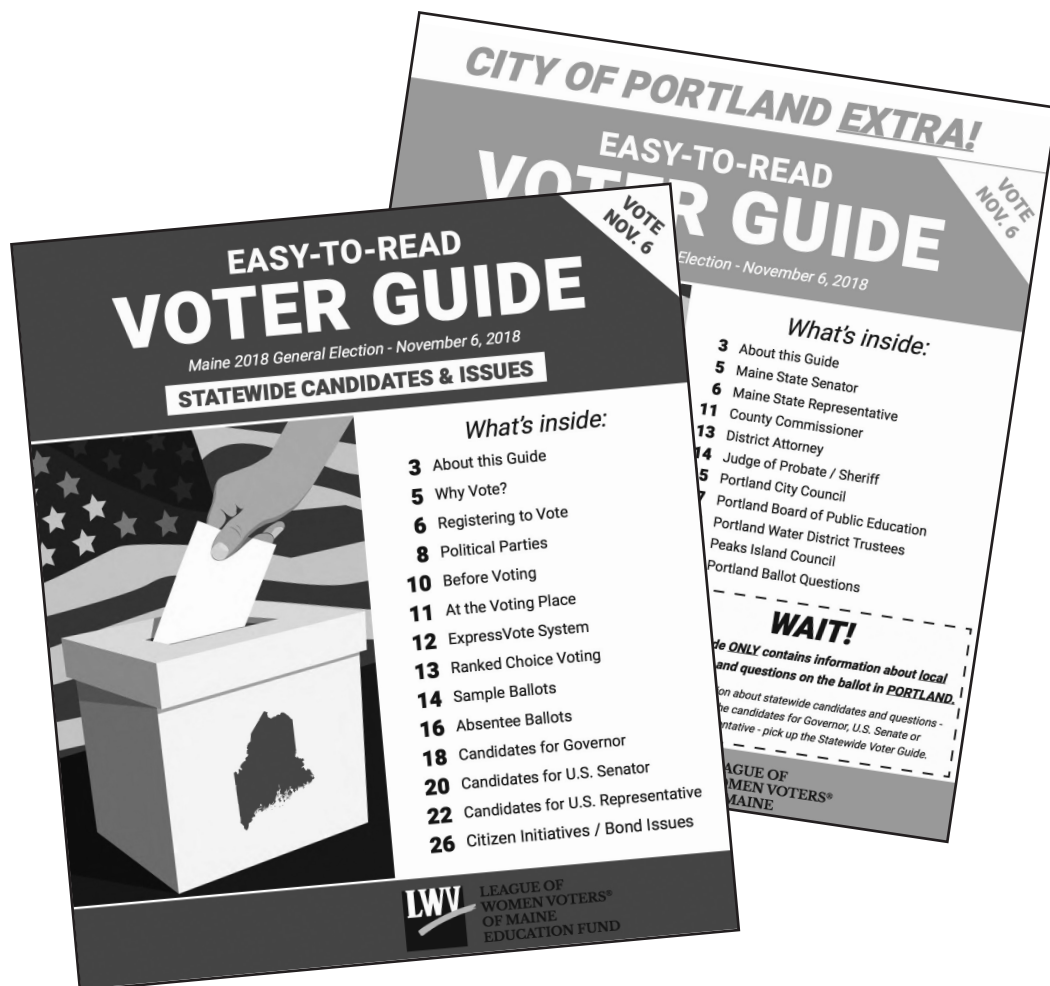
You can **register to vote** up to and on Election Day, including right at the polls!

The last day to request an **absentee ballot** without an excuse is Thursday November 1.

Lots more information is available in the **League of Women Voters of Maine**

Easy-to-Read Voter Guide:

lwvme.org/guide.html



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