



MAINE CLEAN ELECTIONS NEWS

The Newsletter from Maine Citizens for Clean Elections

MAINECLEANELECTIONS.ORG

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SPRING 2018

Maine to Use Ranked Choice Voting on June 12

The June 12th primary election is only a few short weeks away and this year, all eyes will be on Maine, as we implement – for the first time anywhere in the country – ranked choice voting in a statewide election.

Through our new Democracy Partnership with the League of Women Voters of Maine (see Anna's letter on page 2), MCCE is helping to make sure Maine's voters and election officials are ready for a successful RCV election.

Thanks to the persistence and advocacy of the citizens of Maine, despite multiple attempts to undermine the will of the voters, ranked choice voting is now the law in Maine and will be used in the June 12th primary elections for federal congressional, gubernatorial, and state legislative races.

At the same time, we will vote June 12th on whether to continue using RCV for the general election for US Senate and US House.

To that end, MCCE and LWVME have embarked on an ambitious project – "Maine Uses Ranked Choice Voting" – to educate voters, candidates, town clerks, and election officials around the state about ranked choice voting.

MCCE and LWVME are nonpartisan organizations with demonstrated histories of working with stakeholders across the political spectrum and have no stake in the outcome of elections, except insofar as we are committed to making sure that everyone who wants to participate in the political process has the opportunity to do so.


Simply put, we want voters to know what RCV is, how it works, and what to expect when they step into the voting booth or fill out their absentee ballot.



MCCE organizer Viva leads Portland High School discussion on 2018 elections

MCCE and LWVME staff and volunteers are facilitating RCV educational presentations at high schools and colleges, retirement facilities, member and stakeholder organization meetings, and community events across the state, and the feedback so far has been overwhelmingly positive.

One of the most important components of all of these presentations and conversations is communicating to voters that ranking our choices is easy.

We rank our choices all the time in our everyday lives without even realizing it; from what ice cream flavor we'd like for dessert, to what movie we're going to see on Friday night, to what basketball teams we want to make it to the final four, and it makes perfect sense to do the same when electing our public officials. 

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

MAINERANKEDCHOICE.VOTE



Next Generation Seizes Leadership in The Fight Against Big Money

There is no generation gap when it comes to awareness about money in politics.

After recent school shootings, a new group of young people has seized the moment and called out the gun industry and its allies for “buying off Congress” and blocking the kind of sensible gun safety measures favored by a huge majority of Americans.

In emotional and energetic protests after the Parkland shooting, young people held signs calling out politicians who had “blood on [their] hands.” One said “money killed my friends.”

Many signs called out the NRA specifically for their campaign spending, one of the most poignant of which read simply “The NRA kills kids.”

Students brought their messages to the State House in Tallahassee, as well as to the national stage during the student walkouts on March 14 and a nationwide protest on March 24.

The Parkland school protesters were joined by thousands of students across the country, including in Maine, not just in grief and frustration, but in a concerted call to action to change gun policy by reversing the corrosive effect of money at all levels of politics.

This extraordinary turn of events has brought new energy into our work.

We have already seen renewed passion among not just young Mainers, but across all generations.

The profound grief of multiple school massacres is now fueling a movement to restore our democracy so that widely supported, sensible policies are no longer thwarted by deep pocket political spenders. 🗳️

A Note From Anna

We're in the midst of exciting changes at MCCE!

One thing is the same: our commitment to Clean Elections and reducing the influence of big money in politics is unwavering.

By coming together in our new Democracy Partnership with the League of Women Voters of Maine, MCCE will be better able to accomplish that mission. Together, we are working for public policy that fosters political equality and civic engagement to address the problems that confront our communities, our state, and our nation.

As the first joint Executive Director of MCCE and the League of Women Voters of Maine, I am honored to continue the legacy of these organizations and to begin the next stage in the journey toward the realization -- at long last -- of the revolutionary promise of our nation's founding principles. I'm joined in this work by creative and committed staff and a brilliant and incredibly hard-working board, and by your support and engagement, all of which makes MCCE possible.

In this newsletter, you'll find stories about Clean Elections in the governor's race, our voter education work (including a Ranked Choice Voting guide), and a ground-breaking Election Day music festival!

What all of our work has in common is our vision of a democracy truly of, by and for the people. We're building towards a democracy where the power of your voice isn't determined by the size of your bank account, where you were born, the color of your skin, or the people that you know.

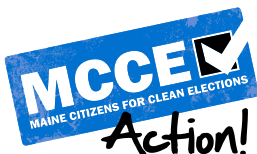


Thanks for building with us.

Anna Kellar



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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Clean Elections Participation Continues to Be Strong



At a time when political consensus is hard to find, it's so exciting to see candidates across the ideological spectrum using Clean Elections!

As of April, Maine has three gubernatorial candidates who have collected more than the 3,200 \$5 contributions from Maine voters required to qualify for the Clean Elections public funding option – one Democrat, one Republican, and one independent.

That means Maine voters of every political leaning will be able to support candidates for governor who will put their interests first!

Legislative participation also looks strong among both Democrats and Republicans.

To date, 189 House candidates and 57 Senate candidates have sought Clean Elections funding.

Only 27% of Senate candidates are raising money from private sources, and only 40% of House candidates. (These figures exclude candidates who don't raise or spend any funds and are exempt from reporting.)

Maine people voted by a 10-point margin in 2015 to reinstate Clean Elections for gubernatorial candidates after the legislature suspended this voter-enacted law in 2013.

This is the second election cycle where legislative candidates in competitive races are eligible to seek supplemental funding – another improvement approved by Maine voters in 2015.

In the 2016 cycle, few candidates qualified for the maximum amount, and a large majority of candidates surveyed by MCCE responded that they had enough money to run a competitive campaign.

Earlier this year the Ethics Commission introduced legislation seeking the repayment of some of the funds taken from the Clean Election Fund over the years.

To date the legislature has not acted on that bill. MCEA is disappointed that the law's 20% funding cushion intended to address this type of uncertainty has not been honored by the legislature.

Nonetheless, depending on the outcome of the primaries and the utilization of supplemental funding, MCEA is cautiously optimistic that existing funds will be sufficient for qualified candidates in 2018. 📌



Team MCCE is excited about Clean Elections in 2018! (left to right: Sarah, Lokotah, Anna, Lado, Jon, John, and Viva)

Everything You Need to Know About #PollFest 2018 Primaries

Maine is about to experience its inaugural, multi-city Election Day music festival, #PollFest, featuring a dazzling array of local and regional talent.

Thanks to Maine Citizens for Clean Elections, The League of Women Voters of Maine, VIVA & The Reinforcements, and a coalition of generous sponsors, the voters of Portland and Bangor will have an extra reason to show up to the polls on June 12.

Along with music of every genre, #PollFest will bring voters unbiased information about voting and the ballot, and help with transportation to the polls.

Expect performances from renowned artists Gina Alibrio & The Red Eye Flight Crew, Micromasse, Okbari, Sarah Violette, and many many more.

Who wouldn't be excited to vote on a day like this? 📌

Visit our new #PollFest website for the full lineup, locations and info about joining the volunteer crew:

WWW.POLLFEST.VOTE



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