



For Immediate Release

October 30, 2014

Contact:

BJ McCollister
MCCE Program Director
207-831-6444

Gubernatorial Candidates Raising More from Big-Money Donors in 2014

Advocates cite recent court and legislative changes as contributing causes while mounting a citizen initiative to strengthen campaign finance laws.

Augusta, ME – Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) released information today showing a significant increase in contributions from large donors in recently filed gubernatorial campaign finance reports compared to the 2010 election. With 11 days until the general election, gubernatorial candidates have already raised \$4.55 million from contributors giving \$500 or more, compared to \$1.18 million during the entire 2010 election cycle.

“Without a gubernatorial Clean Election option and with dramatically increased contribution limits, candidates for our state’s top office are increasingly relying on big-money donors to fund their campaigns at the expense of everyday Maine voters,” said BJ McCollister, Program Director of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections. “The question is, whose interest will the newly elected governor serve once in office, the interests of everyday people or these wealthy contributors?”

Contributors giving \$500 or more account for 59% of all funds raised to date by gubernatorial candidates. In 2010, those donors accounted for only 18% of the total funds raised. Court rulings and legislative action have made dramatic changes to the way elections are financed in Maine in recent years. Maine’s first-in-the-nation Clean Election Act has been weakened for legislative candidates. And although one general election gubernatorial candidate used Clean Elections in 2010, the program has been suspended for gubernatorial candidates this election cycle. At the same time, gubernatorial candidates are now permitted to raise up to \$3,000 from any single contributor in the General Election -- six times the \$500 contribution limit put in place by voters at referendum in 1996.

“The average Mainer barely makes \$500 a week, yet contributions of this amount or more account for the majority of funds raised by our gubernatorial candidates,” said McCollister. “With Maine people struggling to make ends meet, they can’t afford to write large campaign contributions or hire expensive lobbyists to ensure they have a place at the table in Augusta. We must restore our Clean Election laws to ensure all Mainers are represented in Augusta, regardless of their ties to wealth.”

MCCE is currently mounting a signature gathering effort to advance “An Act to Strengthen the Maine Clean Election Act, Improve Disclosure, and Make Other Changes to Campaign Finance Laws” through a citizen-initiated referendum. Nearly 1,000 volunteers are scheduled to be at more than 200 polling locations this Election Day to collect the 70,000 signatures needed to qualify the effort.

Read the analysis

here: <https://www.mainelection.org/sites/default/files/web/PrivateDonorsGov.pdf>

###