

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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# **Advocates Demand Full Implementation of Voter- Approved Clean Elections Law**

*Call on the Administration to Fund Clean Elections Act as Voters  
Intended*

**AUGUSTA** – Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) is calling on the administration to fully implement Maine’s new Clean Election law that was approved by voters in November of 2015.

The LePage administration is blocking the transfer of \$1 million in additional funding that was a key part of the legislation, despite its having been approved with a double-digit margin.

“Voters spoke loud and clear in November with a 10-point margin of victory. We want a strong and fully funded Clean Election law to keep our lawmakers accountable to us, everyday voters, not wealthy campaign donors. By refusing to transfer the funding, the administration is blatantly defying the will of Maine voters,” said Andrew Bossie, MCCE Executive Director and President of the fall ballot effort.

Prior to November’s referendum, Maine’s Clean Election Act was allocated \$2 million in funding a year. Question 1 increased that funding to \$3 million and made changes to allow Clean Election candidates to better compete with privately-financed candidates. By

law, the additional \$1 million in funding should have been transferred no later than Feb. 22, 2016. As of Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2016, the money has yet to be transferred, and there are no signs from the controller or the governor's office that they intend to respect the voice of Maine people and transfer the funds.

"By a wide margin Democrats, Republicans, Greens and independents want to reduce the role of money in politics. They want a strong and fully funded Clean Election law, timely transparency, and government accountability," said Ed Youngblood, a former Republican State Senator from Brewer and MCCE board member. "This isn't a partisan issue. This is a matter of respect for the rule of law as voters intended. The money should be transferred to the Clean Election Fund immediately. We can't ignore the result of the election just because we don't agree with the outcome. That's why we have the citizen-initiative process."

Candidates from all political parties are registering to run using the newly strengthened Clean Election system. As of Feb. 22, 74 percent of all registered candidates for state legislature have filed their intention to use Clean Elections to finance their 2016 races. This figure is up significantly from 2014 when 53 percent of candidates used Clean Elections, but not quite as high as 2008 when 81 percent of legislative candidates used Clean Elections.

The Maine Clean Election Act was originally passed by popular vote in 1996 and aims to reduce the influence of wealthy special interests, corporations and PACs on elected officials by allowing candidates to run using a public financing. To qualify, candidates must demonstrate local support by collecting small-dollar donations from voters within their own districts. Unlike privately financed candidates, Clean Election candidates are forbidden to raise money from special interests for their political ambitions. Maine voters enacted changes at the ballot this fall to restore Maine's Clean Election law after the courts and legislature weakened it.

"The voters have spoken; and now candidates from all parties are signing up in large numbers to use our improved, voter-centered Clean Election law, which will elevate the voice of everyday people in our elections. It's time for Gov. LePage to listen by ensuring that the new system is fully funded," said Bossie.