



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 6, 2017

Clean Election Participation and Success Detailed in New Report

Report comes as advocates work to defeat bills that weaken the voter-approved law and fight for full funding of the nation's most successful public financing law.

Portland, ME - Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) today [released the first of its reports on money in politics in the 2016 election.](#)

“The changes to our first-in-the-nation Clean Election laws enacted by voters in 2015 are working as intended and Clean Elections participation is on the rise once again,” said Andrew Bossie, Executive Director of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections. “When more lawmakers use Clean Elections, everyday people have their voices heard more fully in Augusta. That’s because wealthy special interests and lobbyists don’t fund the political campaigns of our representatives that use Clean Elections.”

For this report, MCCE collected and analyzed publicly available data including information about which candidates participated in the Clean Elections public funding option, how they fared in the November 2016 election, success rates of Clean Elections candidates against privately funded candidates, and participation and success rates by gender.

Most significantly, the data shows that the program revisions enacted in 2015 succeed in reversing the downward trend in candidate participation, with a ten percent increase from the 2014 cycle in the number of candidates choosing and qualifying for public funding.

Just over a year ago, Maine voters approved significant changes to the Maine Clean Election Act by a ten percent margin. The most significant change establishes a new supplemental funding system to replace matching funds, which were invalidated by a court order in 2011.

This first-in-the nation supplemental funding approach was devised in Maine -- by Mainers -- who remain deeply committed to the Clean Elections law. The revised program was put to the test in the 2016 legislative election cycle, and the results of that election are now available, enabling Maine Citizens for Clean Elections to provide quantitative analysis of the revised law.

This report is especially important considering actions pending in the 128th Legislature to continue implementing the law that voters enacted. To comply with the electorate, lawmakers must fully fund Clean Elections so that legislative and gubernatorial candidates in the 2018 cycle can participate with full confidence. The Governor's recently released biennial budget short-changes the Clean Election Fund by more than \$2 million from what voters approved at the polls in 2015.

Additionally, hearings are set to take place before the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee starting Tuesday on the first of several bills that seek to weaken Clean Elections. LD126, An Act to Establish New Monetary Caps for Legislative Candidates under the Maine Clean Election Act, would make Clean Elections less viable for some candidates, including candidates seeking to challenge incumbents as well as those in competitive districts.

"Lawmakers must keep faith with Maine voters by defeating efforts to weaken the newly strengthened and restored Clean Elections law. Maine people, as demonstrated before, are prepared to fight for the laws that place their concerns above those of wealthy special interests in Augusta," continued Bossie.

This report is part of MCCE's ongoing effort to analyze the Clean Elections program and educate the public about significant campaign finance issues in Maine. MCCE plans to report separately on the candidates' experiences with the updated program, trends in fundraising in the 2016 cycle, the role of independent expenditures, and the use of public funding in highly competitive races.

[Read the full report.](#)

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