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## **Mainers Tell Lawmakers “No more IOUs for Clean Elections”**

*Clean Elections Advocates Gathered at the State House, Calling On Lawmakers to Pay Back Money Owed to the Fund*

AUGUSTA – Activists and supporters of Maine’s Clean Election law gathered at the State House today and called on lawmakers to pay back the \$1.7 million that was raided from the Clean Election Fund and used for other purposes in 2015.

“Maine voters have made it clear, they want a strong Clean Election law that allows candidates to run for office without being beholden to wealthy special interests,” said Maine Citizens for Clean Elections Executive Director Andrew Bossie “Now those opportunities are in jeopardy because years of elected officials raiding the fund and using the money for other purposes.”

Over the years, \$9.8 million has been raided from the Clean Elections Fund, with only \$3.1 million of that amount ever returned. A net amount of more than \$6.0 million is owed to the fund. The most recent raid, which amount to \$1.7 million, occurred in 2015, *after* the recent Clean Elections Initiative (also known as Question 1 on the 2015 ballot) was already on its way to the ballot.

“Mainers turned out in November to vote in support of strengthening our Clean Elections law because they want their voice to matter as much as the voice of a wealthy donor. Failure to fully fund Clean Elections would confirm the worst suspicions of too many Maine voters – that their voices, and their votes, can be ignored in Augusta. I urge Maine lawmakers, prove us wrong. Pay back the money that is owed to the Clean Elections Fund and show Maine voters their voices were heard,” said Jolene Lovejoy, a Republican and former Clean Elections candidate for State Representative from Rumford.

If the \$1.7 million is not returned, the Clean Elections Fund could run dry in 2016 or 2018, despite the fact that Maine voters overwhelmingly voted in support of Clean Elections when they passed Question 1 last November with a double digit margin of victory.

“For the Clean Elections Fund to run out of money in this or a future election cycle would be an insult to Maine people, especially after they just overwhelmingly reaffirmed their mandate on Maine’s first-in-the-nation Clean Election Act,” said Polly Ward, Vice-President of the Maine League of Women Voters. “It’s time that lawmakers end the IOU’s and fully fund Maine’s Clean Election Act.”

Following the press conference, Clean Elections supporters took to the halls of the State House to talk to their lawmakers about the importance of fully funding Clean Elections.

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