



PRESS RELEASE

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Advocates Demand Legislature Fix Error, Allow Clean Elections Funding

Call on the House Republican caucus to pass LD1894

AUGUSTA – Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) is calling on the legislature to fix a drafting error in the biennial budget that would prevent the Ethics Commission from dispersing any money to Clean Elections candidates after July 1.

Funding for Clean Elections was included in the biennial budget passed by the legislature last year, including a provision to transfer \$3 million from 2019 into 2018 to ensure sufficient funding for the 2018 election cycle. However, a drafting error in the budget prevents the Ethics Commission from dispersing funds to Clean Elections candidates after the end of this fiscal year, June 30, 2018. LD [1894](#), a bill to fix this and other errors, had a unanimous Ought to Pass recommendation from the Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary. However, it failed to secure the necessary 2/3 vote in the House last week after some House Republicans -- who were initially in favor -- changed their votes.

“Voters have twice spoken loud and clear that they want a strong and fully funded Clean Election law to keep our lawmakers accountable to us, everyday voters, not

wealthy campaign donors. Candidates for the legislature and governor -- including Republicans, Democrats and independents -- have already signed up to use Clean Elections and worked hard to qualify for Clean Elections funding. Thousands of Mainers have given qualifying contributions," said Anna Kellar, MCCE Executive Director. "By refusing to fix what everyone agrees was a mistake by legislative staff, House Republicans are changing the rules in the middle of the game."

More than 240 candidates have qualified for Clean Elections funding, including many Republicans. Unless the legislature comes back in a special session and passes LD 1894, those candidates will not have access to supplemental funding. In addition, the Ethics Commission has advised that under current law, Clean Elections candidates will not have the fallback of being able to raise private funds.

"It is outrageous and unacceptable that a small minority of legislators is holding the Clean Elections program hostage. We call on them to respect the integrity of our elections, the will of the voters, and the legislative process, and to pass LD1894," added Kellar.

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