

PRESS RELEASE

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Clean Elections Candidates Win Majority of Primary Elections

Public has more choices of candidates in 2004, most of whom took no special interest money.

Portland, Maine -- Candidates running in primary elections for the Maine Legislature who refused special interest money and agreed to spending limits far outnumbered those who took private money in 2004, and most of them won their races. Those using Maine's Clean Elections program were the majority of all candidates for all three parties and were the winners in 91% of their races.

In races for open seats where there was no incumbent advantage, and a Clean Elections candidate competed against traditional candidates, the Clean Elections candidate won 8 out of 14 times with one race currently tied. Participation in the Clean Elections program is the highest since its inception in 2000 and has contributed to a record number of total candidates running for state office, giving voters more choices at the polls.

Where Clean Elections candidates ran in the primary, they generally won. Of all 308 Clean Elections candidates, 279 of them won their race and one is currently tied, 91%. Most of the candidates had uncontested primaries, but the number of contested primaries was higher than usual. This year there were 36 contested primary races. In 19 of those races, the voters had only participating candidates to choose from. In only two of those contested primaries were there no Clean Elections candidates.

In the 15 contested primary races between Clean Elections candidates and non-participating candidates, the publicly funded candidate won or are tied in 10, or 67%. Of these 15 races, 14 were for open seats or races to determine who will challenge an incumbent so there was no incumbent advantage. The publicly funded candidate won or are tied in 9 of those 14 races. Only two incumbents had contested primaries and both ran as Clean Elections candidates. In one case the challenger ran with public funding and the other ran traditionally. In both cases the incumbent won their primary.

“Clean Elections money was a critical factor in being able to run a competitive race against a non-participating candidate,” said Richard Rhames (D-Biddeford) who is currently leading his primary against Alan Casavant by two votes, with three ballots to be decided by the Maine Supreme Judicial Court. “While my spending was capped, the Clean Elections funds were still sufficient for me to run a credible campaign. Instead of spending time fundraising, I was on front porches speaking to voters. If I win in November, the voters will know that I represent them and not any campaign contributors.”

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Voters have more candidates to choose from in this year's elections. Excluding the ten independent candidates who have filed but were not on any ballot, there were 429 candidates on the primary ballot in Maine this year. This is up from 382 in 2002, a 12% increase. Of those 429, 308 ran using Clean Elections, or 72%. In 2002, 206 of 382, or 54% of candidates chose the public funding option. There were 50% more candidates running as Clean Elections candidates in 2004 primaries than in 2002. Participation in the system was up among Democrats and Republicans alike, but down among Greens. In 2002, 65% of Democrats running in the primary used Clean Elections, but this year 83% did. Similarly, 42% of Republicans used Clean Elections in 2002, but 62% used the system this year.

Among Greens, 61% of candidates on the ballot chose to use Clean Elections funding, however 5 of their 23 candidates intended to participate but were not certified. The Green Party ran more candidates for the State Legislature than ever before and will have 22 candidates on the November ballot, twice as many as in 2002.

Participation in the Clean Elections program was up in both Senate and House races. In the Senate, 63 of 81 candidates, or 78% were Clean Elections candidates, up from 61% in 2002. In the House, 245 out of 348 candidates participated, for 70% of all candidates. This compares to 52% in 2002. A full list of candidates in the June, 2004 Primary Election listing which candidates were certified as Clean Elections Candidates can be found at <http://www.state.me.us/ethics/>.

"The Clean Election Act is having the impact the voters wanted when they passed it in 1996," said Arn Pearson of the Maine Citizen Leadership Fund. "Voters wanted to have more and better choices of candidates. The increased number of candidates alone is an indication that the voters are getting more democracy. The fact that so many candidates are not taking money from special interests is helping to restore public confidence and integrity of our democracy."

The idea of running without taking any special interest money has also been embraced by all categories of candidates -- incumbents, challengers and candidates in open seats. Of candidates running for open seats, 76% of them used Clean Elections, compared to 66% in 2002. In House races, 70% of incumbents, 66% of challengers and 75% of open seat candidates ran as Clean Elections candidates. In 2002, the participation rates in the House were 41%, 47% and 68% respectively. In Senate races, 82% of incumbents, 71% of challengers and 80% of open seat candidates participated in the Clean Elections program. In 2002, the participation rates in the Senate were 77%, 50% and 57% respectively. There was a 16% increase in the number of challengers to incumbents from 2002 to 2004, even though there were three fewer incumbents running this year.

The increased participation rate among candidates shows that the promise of the Clean Elections program to bring government back to the people has been fulfilled. "It's the only way I'd run," stated Rep. Jim Annis (R-Dover-Foxcroft), who is running for his third time as a Clean Elections candidate. "I live in a rural area, and most of my constituents cannot donate a lot of money. However they are happy to give the \$5 contributions that qualify me for Clean Elections funding. Because of Clean Elections, they feel more empowered and connected to their government."

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Maine is widely recognized as the leader in reducing the power of money in politics. Maine voters passed the first Clean Elections law in the nation by referendum in 1996, and since then six other states have followed with similar laws. Most recently New Jersey passed a pilot program for Clean Elections. Some thirty other states, and a few cities, have similar legislation introduced. Federal Clean Elections legislation has also been introduced, which is timely considering controversy over campaign contributions in the Presidential campaigns. Both candidates Sen. John Kerry and President George W. Bush have raised more money than ever before for Presidential campaigns, and both have been criticized for supporting campaign contributors.

The soft money controls in BCRA, commonly known as the McCain-Feingold Act, have proven not to be the answer to big money in politics. Money has been flowing through 527 organizations, 501-(c)-(4)s and trade PACs to get around the restrictions in BCRA. The Clean Elections program in Maine has proven to be much more effective in keeping spending down and money from influencing politics.

“Thank goodness we have Clean Elections in Maine!” said Doug Clopp of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections. “Now Mainers have fewer of the problems of Washington D.C. and other states where corporate lobbyists try to buy influence with big campaign contributions. In Maine, the biggest contribution most of our candidates take from anyone is \$5. The Clean Elections program has made politics in Maine fair, open and equitable.”

Clopp noted that the Clean Elections fund that provides the resources for Maine legislative candidates to run without special interest money is at risk of being depleted. In the last three years, \$6.75 million has been taken from the Clean Elections fund to be redistributed to other programs. “If we are to make sure we continue to have the great things Clean Elections provides, we need to restore those funds and prevent further depletion,” added Clopp. “Even in these trying budget times, we can't afford not to have Clean Elections. The cost of Clean Elections is minimal to the taxpayers, less than a bag of chips a year. But the benefits of Clean Elections – more choices, lower spending, different kinds of people running, and candidates without ties to special interests – are priceless.”

2004 Primary Election Statistics

In the 2004 Primary Election in Maine, 308 of the 429 candidates, **72% ran using Clean Elections**. This is an increase from 54% in 2002. Another 25 candidates intended to run as Clean Elections but were not certified, indicating that 78% of candidates intended to be Clean Elections candidates (CECs).

There were 429 candidates in the primary, up from 382 in 2002, a 12% increase.

Senate candidates are more likely to use Clean Elections

In the Senate, 63 out of 81 candidates were CECs, **78%**. This is up from 61% in 2002.

In the House, 245 out of 348 candidates were CECs, **70%**. This is up from 52% in 2002.

Democrats are more likely than Republicans or Greens to use Clean Elections.

Out of 203 Democrats, 169 were CECs, **83%**. This is up from 65% in 2002.

Out of 203 Republicans, 125 were CECs, **62%**. This is up from 42% in 2002.

Out of 23 Greens, 14 were CECs, **61%**. This is down from 73% in 2002. (Five others intended to run as CECs, but did not get certified. If they had, they would have 83% participation)

All parties are fielding a larger number of candidates, meaning more primary and general election competition.

Democrats had 203 primary candidates in 2004, up from 182 in 2002, a **12% increase**.

Republicans had 203 primary candidates in 2004, up from 180 in 2002, a **13% increase**.

Greens had 23 primary candidates in 2004, up from 11 in 2002 (including their first contested primary), a **109% increase**.

Republicans:

House

- Out of 164 GOP House candidates, 96 were CECs, or **59%**. This is up from 37% in 2002.
- Of the 96 CECs, 88 won their primary, or **93%**.
- Of the winners of all 151 primary races, CECs won **59%**.
- Of the 13 contested races, 11 of them were won by a CEC. In 7 of those races, all the candidates used Clean Elections. Two races had no CECs.
- **Of the 4 races pitting a CEC against a traditional candidate, CECs won in all of them.**

Senate

- Out of 39 GOP Senate candidates, 29 were CECs, or **74%**. This is up from 59% in 2002.
- Of the 29 CECs, 26 won their primary, or **90%**.
- Of the winners of all 35 primaries, **74%** were won by CECs.
- Of the three contested races, none had all CECs but all had at least one CEC. CECs won only one of those three.

Democrats:

House

- Out of 163 Democratic House candidates, 136 were CECs, or **83%**. This is up from 65% in 2002.
- Of the 136 CECs, 125 won their primary, or **92%**.
- Of the winners of all 148 primary races, CECs won **85%**.
- Of the 12 contested races, 11 of them were won by a CEC. In 6 of those races, all the candidates were CECs. All races had at least one CEC.
- **Of the 6 races pitting a CEC against a traditional candidate, a CEC won in 5 of them**

Senate

- Out of 40 Democratic Senate candidates, 33 were CECs, or **83%**. This is up from 59% in 2002.
- Of the 33 CECs, 26 won their primary, or **79%**.
- Of the winners in all 33 primary races, CECs won **79%**.
- Of the 7 contested races, 6 had all CECs running. Of the one that pitted a CEC against a traditional candidate, the traditional candidate won.

Independents:

Ten independents have filed to run in the 2004 General election, 3 in the Senate and 5 in the House. Of those, 2 of the Senate candidates and 5 of the House candidates are running as CECs, or **70% of the total of independents**.

Incumbents, Challengers and Open Seats:

There are 127 incumbents in the 2004 Primary: 105 in the House and 22 in the Senate.

There are 148 challengers in the 2004 Primary: 124 in the House and 24 in the Senate. This is a 16% increase from 2002.

There are 154 candidates for open seats: 119 in the House and 35 in the Senate.

There are 47 open seats in the House and 14 open seats in the Senate.

Out of 105 House incumbents running for reelection, 74 are CECs, **70%**. In 2002, this was 41%.

Out of 22 Senate incumbents running for reelection, 18 are CECs, **82%**. In 2002, this was 77%.

Out of 124 House challengers, 82 are CECs, **66%**. In 2002, this was 47%.

Out of 24 Senate challengers, 17 are CECs, **71%**. In 2002, this was 50%.

Out of 154 candidates for open seats, 117 are CECs, **76%**. In 2002, this was 66%.

Out of 119 candidates for open House seats, 89 are CECs, **75%**. In 2002, this was 68%.

Out of 35 candidates for open Senate seats, 28 are CECs, **80%**. In 2002, this was 56.5%.

Number of Races for the Maine Legislature

House - 151

Senate - 35

Total - 186 seats

Senate Races - All:

	Dems	Rep	Green	Total
Total candidates	40 for 33 races	39 for 35 races	2 for 2 races	81 for 35 races
CE Candidates	33 (82.5%)	29 (74.4%)	1 (50%)	63 (77.8%)
CE Winners	26 (78.8% of CE won) (78.8% of D winners were CE)	26 ** (90% of CE won) (74.3% of R winners were CE)	1 (50%)	53 ** (84.1% of CE won) (75.7% of winners were CE)
DOI's*	1	1	1	3

*DOI is short of "Declaration of Intent." Candidates who are DOI filed intention to run as a Clean Elections candidate, but for any number of reasons were not certified as such, and did not receive public funds for their campaign.

** One Senate seat is currently tied

Senate Contested Races:

	Dems	Rep	Green	Total
Total	7	3		10
Won by CEC	6	1 (tied)		7
At least 1 CEC	7	3		10
All CECs	6	0		6

House Races - All:

	Dems	Rep	Green	Total
Total candidates	163 for 148 races	164 for 151 races	21 for 20 races	348
CE Candidates	136 (83.4%)	96 (58.5%)	13 (61.9%)	245 (70.4%)
CE Winners	125 (91.9% of CE won) (84.5% of D winners were CE)	89 (92.7% of CE won) (58.9% of R winners were CE)	13 (100% of CE won) (65% of G winners were CE)	227 (92.7% of CE won) (71.2% of races won by CE)
DOI's	9	9	4	22

House Contested Races:

	Dems	Rep	Green	Total
Total	12	13	1	26
Won by CEC	11	10	1	22
At least 1 CEC	12	11	1	24
All CECs	6	7	0	13

Total Races - All:

	Dems	Rep	Green	Total
Total candidates	203 for 181 races	203 for 186 races	23 for 22 races	429
CE Candidates	169 (83.3%)	125 (61.6%)	14 (60.9%)	308 (71.8%)
CE Winners	151 (89.3% of CE won) (83% of races won by CE)	114 * (91% of CE won) (61% of races won by CE)	14 (100% of CE won) (63% of races won by CE)	279 * (91% of CE won) (65% of races won by CE)
DOI's	10	10	5	25

* Includes the one tied Senate race.

Total Contested Races:

	Dems	Rep	Green	Total
Total	19	16	1	36
Won or tied by CEC	17	12	1	30
At least 1 CEC	19	14	1	34
All CECs	12	7	0	19

	Total seats	Candidates	CE Candidates
Open Seats			
Senate	14	35	28 (80%)
House	47	119	89 (75%)
Total	61	154	117 (76%)

	Total	CE Candidates	
Incumbents			
Senate	22 (2 running for same seat due to redistricting)	18	82%
House	105 (2 running for same seat due to redistricting)	74	70%
Total	127	92	72%

Challengers	Total	CE Candidates	
Senate	24	17	71%
House	124	82	66%
Total	148	99	66%