



## Best Response to Supreme Court Ruling in *Citizens United* Case? Maine-style Clean Elections!

### *Soap is on the way to Senator Snowe*

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**Portland, ME** – Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) launched its Send Some Soap campaign today in response to yesterday’s US Supreme Court ruling in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. This ruling could pave the way for highly-capitalized corporate interests to spend unlimited amounts of money directly on campaigns to elect or defeat federal candidates.

MCCE is calling upon Senator Olympia Snowe to cosponsor the Fair Elections Now Act (FENA) which would provide public funding to congressional candidates who accept only small private contributions. In light of yesterday’s decision, MCCE believes that Congress must elevate the role of regular citizens in congressional campaigns so that their voices will be heard above the increased roar of corporate speech.

Representatives Chellie Pingree and Mike Michaud are already cosponsors of FENA in the House of Representatives. Senator Susan Collins opposes FENA.

“By increasing the role of corporate money in elections, the Court has moved federal campaign finance law in the wrong direction,” according to Alison Smith, Co-chair of MCCE. “The time is ripe for an alternative funding option for congressional candidates, so we call upon Senator Snowe to take a stand and bring Maine-style Clean Elections to Washington.”

In 2008, contributions from the top five sectors -- finance and real estate, lawyers and lobbyists, healthcare, communications, and energy and transportation -- accounted for nearly 50 percent of the total \$2.4 billion spent on campaigns, compared with 10 percent from ideological/single issue groups and 3 percent from labor unions.

“Without reform, post-*Citizens United* congressional campaigns will be more focused than ever on high-dollar fundraising further distracting Congress from the pressing issues of the day like Health Care, the Economy, and Energy Policy reform,” said Malory Shaughnessy, Executive Director of MCCE. “FENA provides an alternative system that brings members back into their districts to connect with constituents and raise small contributions. That’s better for democracy than today’s dialing-for-big-dollars and fancy D.C. fundraising events.

MCCE has launched the Send Some Soap campaign to bring their message to Senator Snowe. Supporters are encouraged to go online to [www.sendsomesoap.com](http://www.sendsomesoap.com) to add their name and message to a bar of soap that will make its way to the offices of Senator Snowe.

#### Member Organizations

AARP Maine, Common Cause Maine, EqualityMaine, League of Women Voters of Maine, League of Young Voters, Maine AFL-CIO, Maine Council of Churches, Maine People's Alliance/Maine People's Resource Center, Maine Women's Lobby, NAACP-Portland, Natural Resources Council of Maine, Peace Action Maine

After ten years of Clean Elections in Maine, the evidence is compelling. Publicly funded candidates do only very limited private fundraising early in their campaigns. More diverse candidates are running for legislative office because of the opportunity to use public funding; candidates enjoy much greater parity of resources; candidates focus on voter contact rather than fundraising; and many, many more Maine people contribute to the financing of our elections. Maine's state races are vigorous and competitive, and few go uncontested. Clean Elections is now the default funding system for Maine candidates, and a record 85% of the 124<sup>th</sup> Legislature used the program.

MCCE is a nonpartisan coalition of groups and individuals that works in the public interest to advocate for, increase public support for, defend and improve the Maine Clean Election Act and related campaign finance law. For more information, see our website at [www.maineanelections.org](http://www.maineanelections.org).

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***Below you will find background information on the CU decision.***

**CU Case:**

The Supreme Court in the *Citizens United* case may strike down the long-standing ban on express political advocacy by corporations and unions. Corporations and unions have been prohibited from spending money from their general funds on express advocacy at the federal level since 1947, when Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act.

Prohibiting corporations and unions from using treasury money to influence elections was upheld by the Supreme Court in *Austin v. Michigan State Chamber of Commerce* (1990), and most recently in *McConnell v. FEC* (2003) after the passage of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA). In *McConnell*, the Court noted that, "Congress' power to prohibit corporations and unions from using funds in their treasuries to finance advertisements expressly advocating the election or defeat of candidates in federal elections has been firmly embedded in our law."

If the Supreme Court strikes down the ban on express political advocacy by corporations and unions, it could greatly increase the spending by such groups to influence federal campaigns. It would also open the door to the corrupting influence that would flow from such expenditures, as corporations and unions would use their spending, or the threat or promise of such spending, as a means to influence decision-making by Congress.