



**For Immediate Release**

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**Maine Citizens for Clean Elections Granted “Friend of the Court” Status in National Organization of Marriage Lawsuit Against State of Maine**

TOPSHAM, Maine – The Federal District Court recently granted a motion by Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) to appear as a “friend of the court” in the National Organization of Marriage (NOM) lawsuit against the State of Maine. Attorney Benjamin K. Grant of the law firm McTeague Higbee will represent MCCE in this case.

MCCE anticipates its focus will be on NOM’s challenge to the provision of the Maine Clean Election Act that requires reporting of independent expenditures in Clean Election candidate races. These reports are crucial to the system that provides participating candidates with “matching funds” in hotly contested races.

“The Maine Clean Election Act is now the primary source of campaign funds for Maine’s Legislative races,” notes Grant. “The availability of matching funds is critical to a candidate’s ability to respond to independent expenditures at the end of campaign, and the system relies on accurate reports of independent spending. MCCE has been protecting the pillars of the Act, including disclosure, since its inception, and we will do all we can to support the Attorney General’s effort to preserve this foundational element of the Act.”

The National Organization for Marriage was the largest donor to Stand for Marriage Maine, the political action committee that overturned Maine’s same-sex marriage law in November of 2009. During the campaign, NOM was the subject of a complaint before the Ethics Commission for not disclosing its contributors. This allegation is currently under investigation by the state’s Ethics Commission. NOM filed a lawsuit seeking to overturn the reporting requirement and requested a preliminary injunction, which was denied by the court. NOM later expanded the lawsuit to include many additional campaign finance disclosure requirements to which it objects.

**About Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE)**

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.

**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, NAACP Portland, Maine State Employees Association/SEIU Local 1989, Maine Women’s Lobby, Peace Action Maine, Sierra Club Maine Chapter

MCCE believes that Maine's first-in-the-nation public funding system is a model for the rest of the country and for federal elections. They believe strong campaign finance laws should work to reduce the influence of big money in government, eliminate corruption and the appearance of corruption, increase public access to information, and allow candidates to compete more equitably for public office. MCCE holds that sound reform creates trust, encourages participation in the electoral system, and enhances the accountability of elected officials to their constituents.

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