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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PROGRESS IS BEING MADE AT FEDERAL LEVEL

While Maine celebrates 10 years of Clean Election public funding, progress is being made in Congress toward reform of congressional campaign financing. The Fair Elections Now Act (FENA), HR 6116, will be marked up by the Committee on House Administration this morning.

The mark up of FENA is a significant milestone in the bill's progress. First introduced in March of 2007, support for the legislation has been building. Going into tomorrow's hearing, FENA boasts 164 co-sponsors in the House alone. Maine's First District Representative Chellie Pingree (D) made the bill a top priority when she took office in 2009, joining Representatives John Larson (D - Connecticut) and Walter Jones (R - North Carolina) to sponsor and champion the bill. Second District Representative Mike Michaud has also signed on as a co-sponsor.

"Clean Election public funding works well here in Maine. It puts voters in the driver's seat," said Ann Luther, co-chair of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections. "Bringing Fair Elections to congressional campaigns would refocus these campaigns on the people who live in the candidate's district, not on the people with the most money."

The companion bill in the U.S. Senate is also gaining ground. Sponsor Richard Durbin (D-Illinois) has lined up 35 co-sponsors. No hearing has been scheduled in the Senate. Maine's Senators Snowe and Collins have not yet signed on to the bill.

"People everywhere want what we have here in Maine - a system that puts people first and cuts the connection between big private donations and candidates for our highest public offices," said Alison Smith, Co-chair of MCCE. "Maine leads, and it's gratifying to see Congress taking concrete steps to improve congressional campaign financing."

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