



LEADING NATIONAL EXPERTS TO DISCUSS CLEAN ELECTIONS

ANNIVERSARY GALA TO FOLLOW

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 17, 2010

(Portland, Maine) --- Campaign finance experts from around the country will gather in Portland on **Thursday, November 18th** to help Maine Citizens for Clean Elections celebrate 10 years of Clean Elections in Maine. The day's festivities kick off with a panel discussion on the future of Maine-style campaign finance reform moderated by former Governor Angus King. The day's events will be capped off with an anniversary gala celebrating the Maine people who made Clean Elections possible.

The panel of visiting experts is led by Professor Lawrence Lessig of Harvard Law School. Referring to publicly funded elections, Lessig said: "I am very eager to come to Maine to celebrate the key to solving our political future."

The diverse panel will explore the current political and legal landscape for campaign finance reform, including the outlook for the Fair Elections Now Act, a voluntary public funding system for candidates for Congress. Panelists will discuss the long term implications of this year's Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United*, possible remedies, and the ongoing challenges to Maine's and other states' campaign finance laws.

Brenda Wright is the Director of the Democracy Program at Dēmos, and she applauds the efforts in Maine. Wright said, "Maine's pioneering Clean Elections Act has been a model for the entire country of how to keep government accountable to ordinary citizens. At the ten-year mark, MCCE's leadership has never been more important to ensuring the continued vitality of this landmark reform." Wright is also on the legal team that is working to defend the Maine Clean Election Act in federal court.

Nick Nyhart is the president and CEO of Public Campaign, and he sees the need for campaign finance reform as being more important than ever. According to Nyhart, "With the recent Supreme Court ruling in the *Citizens United* case, the power of big money in politics is drastically increased, making it more urgent than ever to create an alternative system that is powered by small donations. Maine continues to lead the way on one of the most important issues of the day. There's plenty to celebrate!"

Co-Chairs Ann Luther and Alison Smith echoed the sentiment, pointing to Maine's most recent election cycle and the number of legislators who opted to use public funding. Alison Smith said, "Last week we elected 186 Representatives and Senators, 80% of whom used the Clean Election system. This is the way we do elections in Maine."

Ann Luther added, "Understanding where our democracy is heading is important for everyone who cares about good government and public policy. How we elect our representatives matters not just at election time, but in between elections, too. We're thrilled that these nationally-known experts in campaign finance are coming to Maine to share their thoughts and celebrate with us."

The panel discussion will be held at the Maine Historical Society at 489 Congress Street in Portland, and it is free and open to the public. It begins at 3:30 and will conclude at 4:45 pm. The Anniversary Gala begins at 6:00 pm at Port City Music Hall, 504 Congress Street in Portland. Many people who helped with the Clean Election effort will be present, including some of the pioneering candidates who used the brand-new system in 2000. For more information, visit www.mainecelelections.org.

DETAILS:

Thursday, November 18th

Panel Discussion - 3:30-4:45 Maine Historical Society, 489 Congress St. Portland

Anniversary Gala - 6-8:30 Port City Music Hall , 504 Congress St. Portland

**National experts available for interview prior to panel discussion or between 5-7.
Governor King is available prior to the panel discussion only.**

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BIOGRAPHIES

Nick Nyhart co-founder, president and CEO of Public Campaign. Since the early 1990's Nyhart has worked with reformers and their allies across the country in pursuit of publicly financed elections. Prior to his work at Public Campaign, Nyhart worked with money and politics activists across the Northeast and directed a six-state campaign finance organizing project that put the region in the national spotlight with its cutting edge reform measures.

Lawrence Lessig is the director of the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics, and a Professor of Law at Harvard Law School. Prior to returning to Harvard, he was a professor at Stanford Law School, where he founded the school's Center for Internet and Society, and at the University of Chicago. He clerked for Judge Richard Posner on the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals and Justice Antonin Scalia on the United States Supreme Court. For much of his career, Professor Lessig focused his work on law and technology, especially as it affects copyright. His current work addresses "institutional corruption" relationships which are legal, even currently ethical, but which weaken public trust in an institution. He has won numerous awards, including the Free Software Foundation's Freedom Award, and was named one of Scientific American's Top 50 Visionaries. He is the author of *Remix* (2008), *Code v2* (2007), *Free Culture* (2004), *The Future of Ideas* (2001) and *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace* (1999). He is on the board of Creative Commons, MAPLight, Brave New Film Foundation, Change Congress, The American Academy, Berlin, Freedom House and iCommons.org, and the advisory board of the Sunlight Foundation. He has served on the board of the Free Software Foundation, the Electronic Frontier

Foundation, the Public Library of Science, Free Press, and Public Knowledge. He was a columnist for Wired, Red Herring, and the Industry Standard. Professor Lessig earned a BA in economics and a BS in management from the University of Pennsylvania, an MA in philosophy from Cambridge, and a JD from Yale.

Brenda Wright is the Director of the Democracy Program at Dēmos. The Democracy Program works to promote a vibrant and inclusive democracy by reducing barriers to voting and electoral participation and encouraging civic engagement, through research, policy development, advocacy and litigation. Brenda has over 20 years of experience in the democracy field, encompassing voting rights, access to voter registration, campaign finance reform, redistricting, and other election reform and democracy issues. Her extensive trial and appellate experience includes two arguments before the United States Supreme Court. She testifies frequently before Congress, federal agencies and state legislatures and has authored numerous opinion pieces, law review articles, book chapters and other publications on voting rights and democracy issues. Before joining Dēmos, Brenda served as Managing Attorney at the National Voting Rights Institute in Boston. Brenda also served previously as Director of the Voting Rights Project at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law in Washington, D.C. Brenda is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and a member of the Board of Directors of Common Cause Massachusetts and the advisory board of the Prison Policy Initiative. She received her law degree from Yale Law School and her B.A. from Bryn Mawr College.

Governor Angus S. King - Former two-term governor of Maine, Angus S. King joined Bernstein Shur in January 2004 and primarily concentrates on providing strategic and legal advice to the firm's business clients. Born in Alexandria, Virginia, Angus began his career in 1969 as a staff attorney for Pine Tree Legal Assistance in Skowhegan, Maine and became Chief Counsel in 1973 to the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Alcoholism and Narcotics in the office of then-Senator William D. Hathaway. Gov. King returned to private practice law in 1975 with the firm of Smith, Loyd and King in Brunswick, Maine. In the same year, he began his 18-year career as host and co-producer of public affairs programming on Maine Public Broadcasting Network. During this time he hosted a weekly McNeil-Lehrer type program, which featured public issue discussions, candidate debates, and special productions. In addition to local and state officials and private sector leaders, his guests during this period included Ed Muskie, George Mitchell, Malcolm Forbes, Margaret Chase Smith, William F. Buckley, David Broder, and others. In 1983, Governor King became vice-president and general counsel of Swift River/Hafslund Company, an alternative energy development company based in Portland and Boston. In 1989, he founded and served as President of Northeast Energy Management, Inc., a developer of large-scale energy conservation projects at commercial and industrial facilities in central and southern Maine. He sold this business in 1994. Gov. King was elected Maine's 71st Governor in 1994 and reelected in 1998 by one of the largest margins of victory in the state's history. He was one of only two independent governors in the country. During his term in office, the state's corrections and mental health systems were substantially rebuilt, both in terms of program and infrastructure; major improvements were made in the state's service capability-including on-line services; and the state dramatically increased its commitment to research and development. Significant reductions were made in a variety of state taxes. Additionally, as governor, he oversaw the largest increase of lands in conservation in the state's history and started the nationally recognized program to provide laptop computers to every seventh and eighth grade student in the state-regardless of location or family income-with a goal of making Maine's students the most computer literate in the world. Governor King is married to Mary J. Herman and is the father of four sons: Angus III, Duncan, James, and Benjamin, and a daughter, Molly.