



**MEDIA ADVISORY
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 25, 2011**

Clean Election systems are under attack in the State House and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Hearings will be held on Monday in Augusta and Washington, D.C.

On Monday, March 28th, the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs will hold hearings on eight campaign finance bills including one that proposes a full repeal of the Maine Clean Election Act (MCEA).

At the same time, on the same day, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in *McComish v Bennett*, the long-awaited case that could overturn Arizona's Clean Election matching funds system and that could have an effect on Maine's law, as well.

Here in Maine, LD 659, sponsored by Rep. Aaron Libby, calls for repeal of the Maine Clean Election Act, which was passed by voters in 1996 and which is today used by a majority of legislative candidates in both chambers and in both parties. Supporters of the Act are expected to attend the hearing to express their support for the law and to let legislators know that Maine voters want Clean Elections now more than ever.

Besides the repeal bill, the committee will take up three bills that address PAC reform. Several other bills on the agenda aim to respond in advance to the Supreme Court decision in *McComish v Bennett*. That decision is not expected until June.

"MCCE filed an amicus brief in *McComish v Bennett*, and we think a strong case has been made to uphold matching funds on 1st amendment grounds. If the Court considers our factual record here in Maine, we will win. It is premature to consider policy changes before any decision has been made by the Court," said Alison Smith, Co-president of MCCE. "We support LD 848, a Resolve that lays out a process and a timetable for action in the event that the court decision is detrimental to our 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, Maine State Employees Association/SEIU Local 1989, Maine Women's Lobby, NAACP-Portland, Sierra Club Maine Chapter

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Co-Chairs Alison Smith and Ann Luther will be available for interviews beginning at 9:00 am outside the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee Room on the 4th floor of the statehouse. MCCE will present testimony on all of the bills. MCCE is a nonpartisan group that works in the public interest on Clean Elections and campaign finance.

Here's a list of the bills that will be heard beginning at 9:30 Monday morning, March 28, in State House Room 437:

- L.D. 814, An Act Relating to Political Action Committees in Maine
- L.D. 1054, An Act To Revise the Maine Clean Election Act Regarding Legislative Leadership Position
- L.D. 968, An Act To Require Participating Candidates Who Are Principal Officers of Political Action Committees To Give a Percentage of Funds to the Maine Clean Election Fund
- L.D. 843, An Act To Modernize the Maine Clean Election Act by Allowing for Private Contributions
- L.D. 820, An Act To Alter the Distribution of Maine Clean Election Act Funding
- L.D. 726, Resolve, To Reduce Funding to Maine Clean Election Act Candidates
- L.D. 848, Resolve, Directing the Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices To Study Modifying the Maine Clean Election Act
- L.D. 659, An Act To Repeal the Maine Clean Election Laws

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