



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Augusta, ME) - Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) is calling the recent passage of LD 856 a step backward for Maine and a nod to big money donors in the next gubernatorial election.

The House and Senate have amended the original bill to double the contribution limit to privately funded gubernatorial candidates to \$1,500 dollars per election. That means that a single donor would be able to give \$3,000 in an election cycle.

LD 856 as it was initially proposed did not make any change to gubernatorial contribution limits. The amendment was made on the floor of the Senate when the bill came up for a vote.

Alison Smith, Co-president of MCCE said: "It's a sad day when lawmakers decide that the best way to pass unpopular bills is to introduce them at the last minute and skip having a public hearing. Doubling contribution limits for candidates for governor is a significant policy change, and the legislature should have had the benefit of public input in order to make an informed decision."

The bill as originally proposed raised the contribution limit for candidates for county offices to \$750. Candidates in Maine's larger municipalities would also be subject to this new limit.

Contribution limits for gubernatorial candidates were set at \$500 in the same citizen initiated referendum that included the Maine Clean Election Act, which has overwhelming support from Mainers statewide. Just two years ago the limit was raised by 50%, to \$750, and indexed to inflation.

Ann Luther, Co-president of MCCE said, "Maine people want to see less big money in Maine elections, not more. This bill further rolls back the progress we have made. Contribution limits are in place in order to protect against corruption and undue influence, and that matters to all Mainers."

Smith concluded, "Campaign finance laws are important to Maine people, not just the ones in Augusta. This process lacked transparency, and Maine people deserve better."

More votes will be taken before LD 856 achieves final passage, and it is expected that Governor Paul LePage will sign the bill into law.

