



LD 659 DEFEATED

THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE IS UPHELD

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 15, 2011

(Augusta, Maine) - LD 659, a bill to repeal the Maine Clean Election Act, has been defeated. The bill was sponsored by Representative Aaron Libby (R-Waterboro) and would have undone more than a decade's worth of work by Maine citizens. In 1996, Maine voters passed the citizen-initiated Maine Clean Election Act, which makes elections financially accessible to people seeking higher office at the legislative and gubernatorial level and largely separates private money from candidates for the state's highest public offices.

Ann Luther, Co-president of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) said: "The defeat of LD 659 is a victory for Maine people. Support for Clean Elections has grown since it became law, and the latest polling shows more than 80% of Maine people believe it's important to have a Clean Election system while a full three quarters oppose full or partial repeal of the law. What we saw this legislative session was an attempt to undermine the will of the people of Maine."

Across the country, campaign finance laws, including those involving public financing, are under attack. Arizona's Clean Elections law is currently being reviewed by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Alison Smith, Co-president of MCCE said: "Elections should be of, by and for the people, not bought and paid for by a few. As we see these attacks across the country, it's clear we must stand up and be heard. Special money interests should never outweigh the voice of the average citizen. The 125th Legislature did the right thing by defeating this bill."

Several other campaign finance bills await final resolution. LD 856 appears to be on track for passage with a Senate amendment – that had no public hearing – to double contribution limits to privately funded gubernatorial candidates. MCCE opposes the increased contribution limits because it increases the importance and influence of large donations in Maine elections.

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