



For Immediate Release

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Press Release

Maine Lawmakers Vote to Remove Matching Funds for Clean Elections, Advocates Disappointed with “Do-Nothing” Approach

The Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs voted 7-6 to do nothing more than strike the matching funds portion of the Maine Clean Election Act in order to comply with a court decision.

“Doing nothing will not strengthen the Clean Election program, but rather will diminish it,” said Alison Smith, President of the Board of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE). “With several good options on the table, it’s disappointing that a majority on the committee voted to weaken a popular and well-used law. Many will view the weakening of Clean Elections through this do-nothing approach as a first step in dismantling a program that works to reduce the influence of private money in Maine elections.”

Six members of the committee endorsed an option developed by the Ethics Commission in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that overturned matching funds.

“MCCE will work for passage of the minority report which is consistent with the court decision, keeps the integrity of Clean Elections intact, and strengthens the program in important ways,” said Andrew Bossie, Executive Director of the nonpartisan nonprofit organization. “In its narrow ruling, the court upheld public financing, agreeing that it served the public interest of preventing corruption and undue influence. The committee’s minority report is an innovative approach that will ensure the viability of Clean Elections.”

“Innovation is what made Maine the leader on campaign finance reform for a decade, and there is no reason for Maine to relinquish its leadership role today. It has never been more important to reduce the influence of money from PACs and other special interests on Maine’s elections and government,” Bossie continued.

For more information on the minority report, go to the Maine Ethics Commission website:

http://www.maine.gov/ethics/pdf/summary_2011_report_on_MCEA.pdf

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