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Report Examines Health Care Industry's Political Donations

AUGUSTA - Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) released the third in its series of Money in Politics reports today.

Money, Insurance, and Health Care Policy: How Health Insurance Companies' Campaign Contributions Helped Them Win Major Legislation examines the political donations made by health care interests over the ten-year period leading up to the enactment of Maine's controversial new health insurance law.

This report found that more than \$1 million dollars was spent on campaign contributions to candidates and political action committees by those with powerful financial interests in both health insurance and health care. It also found that the company with the most to gain from the new law, Anthem/Wellpoint, dramatically changed its pattern of giving leading up to and after the Republican sweep in the 2010 elections.

When the 125th Maine Legislature passed LD 1333 into law, fundamental changes were made to the way Maine regulates health insurance. Health insurance carriers today have more flexibility and are constrained by fewer requirements – changes the industry had long sought. While proponents tout the benefits to businesses and consumers, opponents caution that the changes will result in inequities in cost and access to health care among demographic and geographic groups, and warn that seniors and rural Mainers in particular will be disadvantaged.

"Access to health care and its cost are important to every Maine business, family and individual," said Andrew Bossie, Executive Director of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE). "The new law made fundamental changes that are already being felt across the state. Maine people have the right to know how such a consequential law came to be, and part of that is understanding the role that campaign donations may have played in its passage."

MCCE works in the public interest, and the Money in Politics Project is designed to tell the story of money in Maine politics and illustrate both the value and the limits of current campaign finance laws. "Voters are rightly at the center of our political system," said Bossie. "Understanding the flow of money and the role of special interests in elections is critical, and Maine's transparency laws help. But Maine must also ensure that our campaign finance laws keep special interests, like for-profit health insurance companies, from wielding undue influence in our elections and in our government."

The Money in Politics Project is a series of twelve reports about the role and effect of money on Maine politics. The reports combine a review of publicly available campaign finance data with on-the-ground analysis of how money influences Maine's elections, government, and public policy. Maine Citizens for Clean Elections launched this project because money in politics is an issue of vital concern to the people of Maine, one that goes to the heart of our democratic system.

Find the full report at www.maineclipselections.org.

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