



For Immediate Release

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Analysis Shows Large Increase in Independent Expenditures in Maine Legislative Races

AUGUSTA - Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) released information today showing a significant increase in expenditures by independent groups seeking to influence legislative races in Maine.

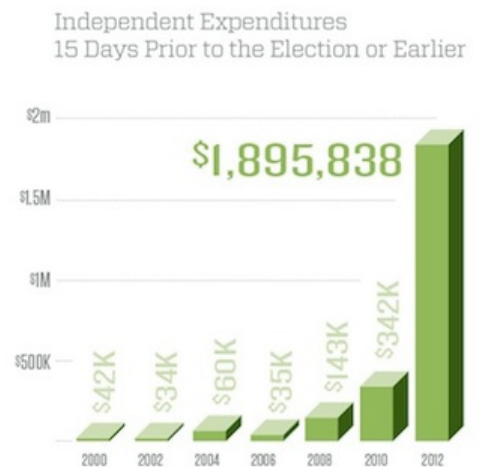
With two weeks to go before Election Day, these groups have already spent \$1,895,838 to influence House and Senate races across Maine. This amount does not include spending by candidate campaign committees.

Total legislative race independent expenditures for the entire 2010 election cycle were \$1,485,833.

“This year’s independent spending has already eclipsed the record for any previous cycle,” noted MCCE Executive Director Andrew Bossie. “And we suspect the most intense period of independent spending activity is yet to come.”

According to MCCE’s analysis of recent elections, 85 percent of independent expenditures are typically made in the last two weeks of the campaign season.

Independent expenditures are advertisements, mailings, robocalls, and any other form of campaign communication made without coordination with a candidate or the candidate’s campaign. Many independent expenditures in Maine are made by entities affiliated with a political party or the leadership of a legislative caucus. Some are familiar issue groups while others are newly formed PACs that might be active in only one election cycle.



Thirty-five separate entities have reported independent expenditures in Maine legislative races this year, and Maine law requires each to file reports with the Ethics Commission. Voters can identify independent expenditures by looking or listening for a disclaimer which clearly states that the ad or mailer was not paid for or authorized by any candidate. MCCE encourages voters to look at who is paying for these messages and what agenda those groups or entities have, then determine whether they are credible sources of information.

“Many communications funded by independent expenditures are more negative and less candid than communications from candidates themselves,” continued Bossie. “Candidates do not appreciate these attack ads even when they are meant to help their candidacy, since it is the candidate who is held accountable by voters when ads are offensive or misleading.

“Having a strong Clean Election system that gives participating candidates the means to set the record straight is important, and it is very unfortunate that the 125th Legislature weakened the law,” said Bossie. “Strengthening the system will ensure that future candidates are not sitting ducks for these expensive attack campaigns, and will allow voters to hear directly from candidates even when the other voices speak loudly.”

MCCE supports a strong Clean Election system that puts people ahead of wealthy special interests. Given the reality of today’s limited legal and constitutional landscape, a robust public funding system coupled with strong transparency laws provides the best way to counteract the flood of unaccountable money into our democratic process.