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Outside Groups Outspend Candidates in 2012 Legislative Races

AUGUSTA – For the first time ever in Maine legislative elections, candidates were outspent by groups and organizations making independent expenditures, according to Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) who conducted an initial analysis of campaign financing in the 2012 election.

Reports filed Tuesday show that candidates in Maine legislative races raised \$3,405,858 for their 2012 campaigns. During that same election cycle, political action committees (PACs), political parties, and other entities operating independently of any candidates spent \$3,576,309 in those races.

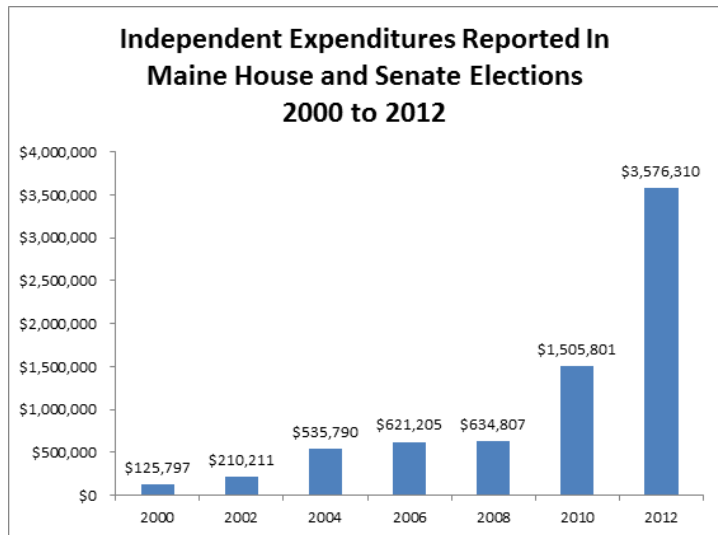
“We now know for certain what many Maine voters suspected — that more often than not, outside interests are buying the messages Mainers are hearing and seeing and exerting more influence over campaigns than the candidates, themselves,” said MCCE Executive Director Andrew Bossie. “This huge increase in outside money is a very troubling trend.”

Unlike money raised and spent by candidate campaigns, independent expenditures are often difficult to trace back to the original source of the

funding. In addition, the entity making independent expenditures can raise funds in unlimited amounts, giving one individual or corporation far more influence than that of ordinary voters. A significant amount of this spending buys negative attack ads, with little accountability compared to the candidates’ own campaign materials.

“Maine people want to hear directly from their candidates, not outside interest groups with agendas of their own,” said Bossie. “We can ensure that the interests of Maine voters are first and foremost in our government by restoring the Clean Election system and calling on state and federal lawmakers to reverse Supreme Court rulings that have elevated the role of big money in our elections.”

MCCE will analyze the 2012 independent expenditure data in more detail in a forthcoming report.



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