



For Immediate Release

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Report Details the Flow of Special Interest Money into Maine Leadership PACs

AUGUSTA - Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) unveiled the first in a new series of Money in Politics reports titled *PACs Unlimited: How Legislator PACs distort Maine Politics*. MCCE simultaneously released its latest poll results.

PACs Unlimited details the flow of money raised and spent by legislators outside of their own campaigns. More than \$12 million came through the largest caucus and leadership PACs during the period covered in the report.

“While Maine’s legislative campaigns are generally fueled with small donations, the opposite is true for legislator PACs,” said Andrew Bossie, Executive Director of MCCE. “PACs remain a conduit for unlimited contributions from special interests, and that money makes a difference in elections and in our government.”

Privately funded legislative candidates may accept up to \$350 from a donor in an election, and Clean Election candidates accept no donations except for the very limited Seed Money raised early in the campaign, not to exceed \$100 from any donor. The report shows that donations of under \$350 made up only 13% of caucus and leadership PAC fundraising.

The report identifies the top “Heavy Hitters,” the 152 donors who give 73% of all money raised by these PACs. These top givers donated an average of \$60,086 apiece over the ten-year period covered by the report. Focusing in on several issue areas, *PACs Unlimited* shines the light on the tactics used by various industries to influence the outcome of legislative initiatives.

The poll results released today show the importance of Clean Elections to Maine people. Critical Insights, a Portland-based nonpartisan research firm, included four questions for MCCE in their Spring Tracking Poll. The results show that Maine people think it is important for Maine to have a Clean Election program (88%, with 65% saying “Very Important”). The poll also found that there is wide spread concern about special interest influence in our government and that Mainers want to push forward with more reform, not less (78% to “push forward with reforms” versus 15% to “roll back restrictions.”).

“MCCE will keep telling the story of money in Maine politics, and we will press on with new ideas to address the legitimate concerns of Maine people,” said Bossie. “Putting people at the center of our political system is key, and that means we must thoroughly understand the role of special interest dollars in our system. Legislative PAC activity is legitimate, too, but the unlimited contributions allowed under Maine law and the huge sums given raise concerns about the independence of legislative leadership.”

Future Money in Politics reports will examine top donors, top fundraisers, and specific issues.

[Download *PACs Unlimited* here.](#)

[Download the full poll results here.](#)

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