



For Immediate Release

July 19, 2012

Contact:

Andrew Bossie
MCCE Executive Director
207-831-6223

Report Examines Private Fundraising of Maine Legislative Candidates

AUGUSTA - Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) unveiled the second in its series of Money in Politics reports today. Titled *The Leader Board: Maine's Top Legislative Fundraisers and How They Earned Their Spots*, the report profiles the top ten campaign spenders among privately funded candidates who ran for a seat in the Maine Legislature.

MCCE analyzed data provided by Maine's Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices (Ethics Commission) over a period of ten years. The report categorizes the candidate's fundraising style based on sources from which they raised the bulk of their funds.

"Our analysis shows distinct styles of fundraising," said Andrew Bossie, Executive Director of MCCE. "There are the wealthy self-funders, the ones who rely largely on corporations and political action committees, and the candidates who raise money from a broad array of sources, including many individual donors."

During the period covered in *The Leader Board*, privately funded legislative candidates raised money under a \$250, and later a \$350, contribution limit. The report shows the relative importance of large and small donors in traditional fundraising. Donors who maxed out to candidates provided a significant amount to all but the self-funded candidates, providing more than half of the total funds for six of the ten candidates. Donations of \$50 or less made up a much smaller portion of the funds – anywhere from less than 1% to 23%, with all but two candidates in the single digits.

Since the Maine Clean Election Act has been in effect, most legislative candidates have rejected private money. For the 20% or so who opt out of Clean Elections, Maine's disclosure laws show the sources and amounts of money raised by candidates. "Voters deserve to know who funds campaigns," said Bossie. "At MCCE, we believe that a better understanding about how private money influences public elections leads to a better informed electorate, and that leads to a healthier democracy in Maine."

"MCCE hopes that *The Leader Board* will help Maine people understand the value of our campaign finance laws – the contribution limits that ensure that no single donor wields outsize influence, and the transparency that allows MCCE and others to illustrate the flow of money through campaigns," Bossie continued. "With every aspect of campaign finance laws under attack in the courts and in Congress, it's more important than ever that everyday people know what is at stake."

"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 better understand the role of private dollars in our system."

While some of the profiled candidates earned their spot in the top ten by raising money over many election cycles, the top spot went to John Linnehan, a one-time Senate candidate who put \$200,000 into his unsuccessful race. His spending in the 2002 race was ten times the typical Senate candidate. Linnehan lost to Dennis Damon who is Number 7 on the Leader Board.

Future Money in Politics reports will examine top donors, the role of independent expenditures, and specific issues.

[Download The Leader Board here.](#)

###