



For Immediate Release
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Maine Lawmakers Vote to Advance Bill To Strengthen Clean Elections

The vote comes as polling results show overwhelming support for efforts that reduce the role of money in politics

The Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs voted 7-5 to approve a bill that would return the Maine Clean Elections Act to the robust program that voters intended when they passed the law in 1996. The Committee voted "Ought to Pass as Amended" on LD 1309, An Act to Strengthen the Maine Clean Elections Act.

The bill, sponsored by Sen. Ed Youngblood (R – Brewer), would replace the matching funds system that was struck down by the courts in 2011 and comes after the 125th legislature failed to replace the portion of the law affected. The bill now moves to the Senate floor. If the bill is passed and signed by the Governor, candidates would still qualify for Clean Elections in the same manner they always have, but candidates in high-spending races would be able to seek additional funds by collecting additional \$5 Qualifying Contributions from voters in their districts.

"Maine people passed the Clean Election Act because they want their lawmakers accountable to them, not wealthy special interests that can write large campaign contributions," said Andrew Bossie, Executive Director of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections. "The Committee's vote today moves us closer to restoring Clean Elections to the effective system that voters intended when they passed the law in 1996."

MCCE also released a poll today showing overwhelming support for the citizen-initiated Clean Election Act. According to the poll, 84% of likely Maine voters believe that Maine should continue to have Clean Elections.

"This poll shows two things. First, Maine people overwhelmingly agree that campaign money is drowning out the voices of ordinary people in our elections and government. Second, Republicans, Democrats, Greens, and independents want to move forward with Clean Elections," Bossie continued. "We want a government of, by, and for the people, not a government accountable to the highest bidder."

Two amendments were added to the bill during the Committee work session. One would allow the Ethics Commission to have adequate funds in time for the 2014 elections if the bill were enacted. The other would reduce the number of additional Qualifying Contributions needed for senate candidates to access additional funds during the general election.

More information about LD 1309 can be found at:

https://www.mainelections.org/sites/default/files/fact_sheets/Clean_final_one-pager_on_LD_1309.pdf

Polling results, conducted by the Maine-based firm Critical Insights, can be found at:

https://www.mainelections.org/sites/default/files/polling/130516_MCCE_Polling_CI_TopLineResults.pdf

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