



For Immediate Release

December 19, 2013

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Report Details Campaign Contributions From Recipients Of Tax Breaks

BETR/BETE recipients are making large campaign contributions.

Augusta, ME – A report released today by Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) reveals that the top 25 beneficiaries of the BETR/BETE tax program have given over \$2.3 million in campaign contributions since 2000, while receiving over \$138 million in tax breaks since 2009. “Focus on BETR/BETE: Does Campaign Cash Help Explain the Survival of a ‘Risky’ Tax Refund Program?” is the 12th in a series of reports published by MCCE’s Money in Politics Project. In recent years, the Office of Program Evaluation & Government Accountability (OPEGA) has raised flags around the programs because their benefit to Maine people is not clear.

“Despite a tough state budget climate where programs and services are being slashed, these high risk programs still endure,” said BJ McCollister, Program Director for MCCE. “Our analysis shows that the businesses that are benefiting from these tax breaks are also making sizable campaign contributions to benefit the very lawmakers who determine the future of the programs.”

The report shows that the major beneficiaries of the BETR/BETE program are also major players in campaign funding. The businesses profiled spread their \$2.3 million in contributions among various political action committees, candidate campaigns, and political party organizations, giving to both side of the aisle, but slightly favoring Republican interests. Republican-leaning PACs took in \$273,250, while Democratic-leaning entities received \$179,366.

“Contributions from big-money businesses make it harder for the voices and needs of Maine people to be heard in the political process,” said McCollister. “We have to ask ourselves, are these campaign contributions playing a role in the survival of a program that has questionable benefit to Maine people?”

Find the full report at mainecleanelections.org/money-12

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