



For Immediate Release

April 11, 2014

Contact:

BJ McCollister
MCCE Program Director
207-831-6444

Campaign Finance Advocates Call for Override of Gubernatorial Veto

Group says bill would close campaign finance loophole.

Augusta, ME – Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) called for an override of Governor Paul LePage’s veto of a bill that closes a loophole in Maine’s campaign finance system late Friday.

“This simple bill closes a problematic loophole in our campaign finance system,” said Andrew Bossie, MCCE’s Executive Director. “Maine voters want compliance and accountability when it comes to campaign finance laws, and this bill provides that.”

LD 1631 makes clear that when key persons affiliated with a candidate campaign make expenditures to benefit the candidate, those expenditures are contributions. Because contributions are limited, and independent expenditures are not, it ensures that campaign insiders do not evade contribution limits with sham independent spending.

“While this bill does not attempt to reverse the trend of independent expenditures, it does attempt to clarify when an expenditure is really a contribution to the candidate,” said Senator Tom Saviello, the bill's lead sponsor, during the public hearing on the bill. “It starts with the simple assumption – you might even call it a 'no-brainer' – that certain persons close to a candidate's campaign cannot with a straight face make an independent expenditure on behalf of that candidate.”

The bill is modest in scope, simply clarifying that treasurers, campaign managers, and other agents of a campaign can’t make expenditures that will be considered independent of the campaign. The practical effect is that all campaign spending by agents of a candidate campaign during an election will be subject to Maine’s contribution limits. Since Clean Election candidates do not accept private contributions, this sort of spending would not be allowed at all.

“We are optimistic that the legislature will override this veto and move forward, not backward, when it comes to our campaign finance system,” concluded Bossie. “This common-sense bill is good for democracy and should become law. We ask each and every legislator to carefully consider the integrity of our election laws and vote to override Governor LePage’s ill-advised veto.”

###