



PRESS RELEASE  
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Contact: Jen Lancaster, Communications Manager  
[Jen@DemocracyMaine.org](mailto:Jen@DemocracyMaine.org) | 859.753.0425

### **MCCE STATEMENT ON GOVERNOR'S VETO OF LD 194**

[PORTLAND, ME] — Maine Citizens for Clean Elections released the following statement in response to Governor Janet Mills' veto of [LD 194](#), An Act To Prohibit Contributions, Expenditures and Participation by Foreign Government-owned Entities To Influence Referenda:

"We are disappointed that the governor has vetoed this important legislation to get foreign government money out of Maine politics," said Anna Kellar, Executive Director for Maine Citizens for Clean Elections. "LD 194, which received overwhelming public and bipartisan lawmaker support at its public hearing, would close an important loophole in our laws by preventing foreign governments from spending in ballot question campaigns. This commonsense reform was supported by a majority of the U.S. Congress as a part of the For The People Act, and we agree with a majority of Congress and the Maine Legislature that this bill is neither unconstitutional nor offensive to the political process."

Many courts have upheld state powers to protect the democratic process from outside money and to safeguard the sovereignty of the state's voters. Supporters of LD 194 pointed to a 2011 opinion of Circuit Court judge (now Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court) Brett Kavanaugh rejecting the First Amendment argument in a case raising similar issues, stating that "The government may exclude foreign citizens from activities 'intimately related to the process of democratic self-government.'" *Bluman v. Fed. Election Comm'n*, 800 F. Supp. 2d 281, 287 (D.D.C. 2011).

LD 194 is a bill sponsored by Senator Rick Bennett (R-Oxford) to prohibit corporations with substantial foreign government ownership from spending in ballot question campaigns. It passed the Maine House and Maine Senate with bipartisan votes in support in both chambers.

*Maine Citizens for Clean Elections is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization working to ensure that Maine's campaign finance laws, elections, and government serve the public interest, both in*

*principle and in practice. We engage Maine people from across the political spectrum, using research, education, and outreach to further fairness, inclusion, and opportunity in our politics.*

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