



PRESS RELEASE
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A New Report on Participation in Maine's Clean Elections

Maine remains leader in Clean Elections and role model to For The People Act

[PORTLAND, ME] — In 2020, the Maine Clean Election Act (MCEA) marked a major milestone: twenty years successfully providing over 2,500 general election candidates a way to campaign without raising private contributions. Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) has published new data on the Clean Elections participation rates and outcomes, covering the 2018 and 2020 legislative races.

Maine needs the continued success of Clean Elections. Getting big money out of politics creates a democracy that truly represents Maine people. **Additionally, as the first state to create a public funding system, Maine has an important role to play in the national debate over how to reform our democracy.**

The For the People Act (H.R. 1/S. 1) is a sweeping package of election and voting rights reform. It also creates the space for Clean Elections, a small donor, public matching fund system that would match contributions up to \$200 per donor at a 6-to-1 ratio for federal candidates.

Maine knows the success of Clean Elections. The MCEA program allows candidates to compete for office even if they object to the fundraising imperative or lack wealthy friends and contacts who could fuel their efforts. Many candidates have stepped forward and served distinguished careers. The innovative program also encourages issue-based campaigns maximizing direct contact between voters and candidates.

HIGHLIGHTS:

In the [new report](#), MCCE analyzed a wide range of metrics regarding races for the 186 seats in the legislature to shed light on Clean Elections participation, success rates, and demographic trends across the years. The data shows some interesting highlights:

- A total of 206 candidates in the 2018 general election used Clean Elections. In 2020, a total of 192 used the program. The all-time participation high occurred in the 2006 cycle when 314 general election candidates qualified and used the program.

- Over the years many women have told us that Clean Elections allowed them to fulfill their goal of running for the legislature. More women — a total of 83 — were elected to the legislature in 2020 than ever in Maine history.
- Democratic participation continues to outpace Republican. There were 62 Republican candidates in the Clean Election program (39% of Republican candidates) and 122 Democratic candidates in the Clean Election program (72% of Democratic candidates). Republican participation remains substantial, especially in the Senate.

[Read the report here.](#)

This report is part of MCCE's ongoing efforts to analyze the Clean Elections program and educate the public about significant campaign finance issues in Maine. Along with our partner, the League of Women Voters of Maine, MCCE will continue to report on related topics such as the role of corporate contributions in Maine elections, giving patterns by major industries with interests before the state legislature, the influence of independent expenditures, voter participation, and the health of our democracy in general.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING:

"The facts describing the results of Maine's leadership creating clean elections shows that money is no longer a factor keeping a friend, neighbor or family member from running for and being elected to office. It brings joy to know that for nearly 20 years, MCCE's clean elections work has put the *we* back in *we the people*."

— Sue Ellen Bordwell, Co-chair for Democracy in Action (Maine Unitarian Universalist State Action Network)

"It is important to study and measure the results of any government effort such as the Maine Clean Election program. This report provides a service to the public and to policymakers by detailing participation rates, election outcomes, and other metrics of this program as it completes its 20th year."

— Senator Rick Bennett (R - Oxford), Maine state senator representing District 19

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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