



**PRESS RELEASE**

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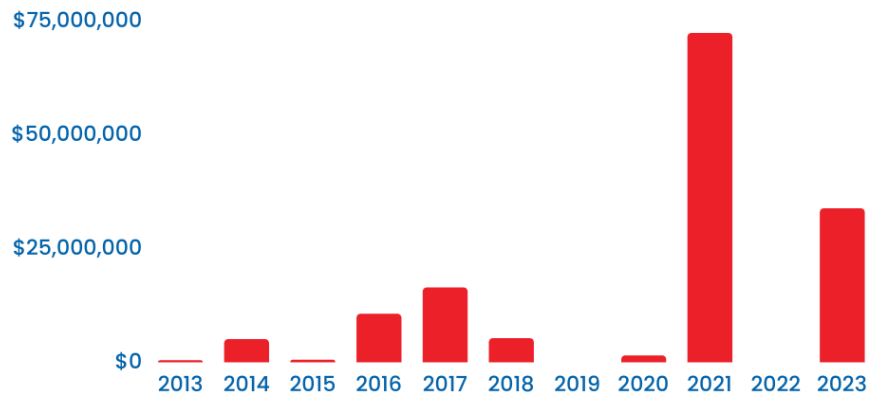
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## Who's Spending Big in the Referendum Election?

[PORTLAND, ME] — Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) invited the press and media to a [press conference](#) that highlighted the major takeaways from campaign finance reports for the November 2023 referendum election.

Over \$33.7 million dollars have been poured into the referendum election so far. Compare this number to over \$72.3 million spent during the 2021 referendum election. With another month left to go until Election Day, it's expected that 2023 spending will surpass any recent election years.

## MAINE REFERENDUM SPENDING



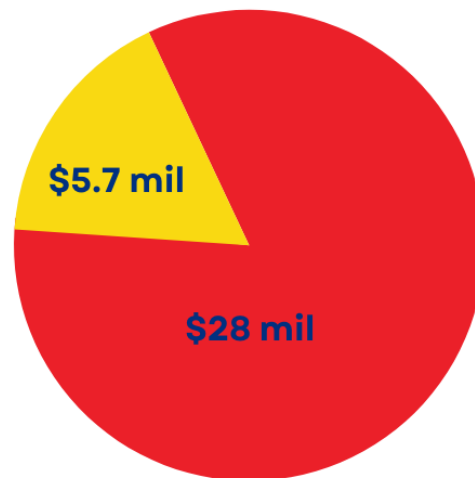
Of the \$33.7 million spent so far this cycle, MCCE estimates that \$28 million was spent by foreign government-owned entities — that’s 83%. The numbers are appalling. These entities are dumping money into our elections in order to serve their special interests and sway Maine voters. MCCE also estimates that more than \$100 million has been spent in the last three referendum elections alone:

- Over \$20.7 million spent on 2020 corridor question that never made it to ballot.
- Enmax (Versant parent company) has contributed over \$13 million towards a Ballot Question Committee in 2022-23.
- Avangrid+CMP have contributed over \$21 million towards a Ballot Question Committee in 2022-3.
- Avangrid+CMP+NECEC contributed over \$45.5 million towards a Ballot Question Committee in 2020-21
- Hydro-Quebec contributed over \$22 million towards a Ballot Question Committee in 2020-21.

## 2023 REFERENDUM SPENDING

**83%**

of referendum spending in 2023 has been by foreign government-owned entities



These numbers are one of the reasons that MCCE [endorses Question 2](#) and sees it as one way to limit political spending. Question 2 closes a loophole and will prohibit donations and disbursements by foreign governments, foreign government-owned entities, and foreign government-influenced entities in ballot measures and candidate campaigns.

“We are continuing to fight for common sense rules that keep elections in the hands of Maine people. Our message to voters is that if the \$100 million in foreign government spending makes you angry, don’t get cynical about it — vote yes on Question 2 and push back,” said Anna Kellar, Executive Director of MCCE.

Question 2 also calls on our congressional delegation to support a 28th amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would fight corruption and reduce the influence of money in politics. This would turn the tide after the disastrous 2010 decision in the *Citizens United* case, when the Supreme Court overturned a six decade-long prohibition against spending corporate and union treasury money to directly campaign for or against federal candidates.

Committees — including Political Action Committees (PACs), Ballot question committees (BQC), and State Party Committees — submitted their [quarterly reports](#) on October 5, and data became available shortly after via the Maine Ethics Commission.

Ballot question committees (BQC), if they do not meet the definitions of a Political Action Committee, are created to influence the outcome of a ballot question in a statewide election. If the BQC receives more than \$5,000 in contributions, then the organization must register and file campaign finance reports with the [Ethics Commission](#).

*\*MCCE has not taken a position on Questions 1 or 3.*

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*[Maine Citizens for Clean Elections](#) (MCCE) 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.*