

# CLEAN ELECTIONS AND WOMEN IN MAINE – 2004

**In a political system where money determines who can run for office and who wins, women are often at a disadvantage.**

Men have traditionally had an advantage over women candidates simply because of a greater access to money. Pay inequity, gender discrimination, and increased responsibilities for caregiving for children and adult family members still ensure that women have less access to money, time, and other resources to run for office. This has led to women being historically underrepresented in government.

**The Maine Clean Election Act has helped level the playing field.** Clean Elections allows for anyone to run for office with public funding if they can prove they have public support in their district. No longer are gender, access to money or influential friends prime determinants of who can run a viable campaign for Maine Legislature or Governor. Clean Elections has opened the doors for more women to run who would not have been able to run before.

**Women *ARE* choosing the Clean Election option, and using it with great success.**

## **The Numbers...**

### **2004 Primary Election for Maine Legislature**

***Women were more likely to use Clean Elections than men.***

- Of the 429 total candidates, 101 of them women (24%).
- Of the 328 **men**, 230 or **70%** used the Clean Elections program.
- Of the 101 **women**, 78, or **78%** used the Clean Elections program.

***Women were more likely to win with Clean Elections.***

- Of the 78 women who used Clean Elections, 72 won their primary, or **92%**.
- Of the 23 who ran traditionally, **87%** won.

In the 10 contested primary races with at least one woman running with Clean Elections funding, a woman Clean Elections candidate won in 5 of them.

### **2004 General Election for Maine Legislature**

***Women are using Clean Elections more than men are in the 2004 General election.***

- 394 Total candidates, 103 of them women (26%).
- Of the 291 **men**, 221, or **76%** are using the Clean Elections program.
- Of the 103 **women**, 86, or **84%** are using the Clean Elections program.

# CLEAN ELECTIONS IN MAINE

## A Factor in Women Running

Does removing MONEY as a factor in the decision to run for office make a difference for women? According to them, YES.

How do we know? We asked them.<sup>1</sup>

**Q. How important was the availability of the Clean Election option in making your decision to run for office?**

**Who answered “very”?**

Women	62%
Men	48%

**Which candidates would not, or probably would not, have run for office without the availability of Clean Elections?**

Women	18	42% of women
Men	28	23% of men
Total	46	28% of candidates

**Q. Overall, how satisfied are you with the Clean Election system?**

	Women	Men
Very	67%	53%
Reasonably	28%	42%
Not very	2%	3%
Not at all	2%	1%

<sup>1</sup> This data is from a report published by the Maine Citizen Leadership Fund in April 2003, written and compiled by Alison Smith. The Maine Citizen Leadership Fund conducted a survey of 2002 Clean Election candidates in December 2002 and January 2003. The entire report can be found at <http://www.mainecelelections.org/pdfs/CLEANELECTIONSURVEY2003.pdf>