



Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

LD 300 – An Act To Preserve Funding for the Maine Clean Election Act by Removing
Gubernatorial Candidates from Eligibility (Rep. Sutton)

February 17, 2017

Senator Mason, Representative Luchini, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on
Veterans and Legal Affairs:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on LD 300 – An Act to Preserve Funding for the Maine
Clean Election Act by Removing Gubernatorial Candidates from Eligibility.

My name is Andrew Bossie. I am the Executive Director of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections.

Maine Citizens for Clean Elections has been the leading campaign finance organization in Maine
for over twenty years and one of the nation's most respected state-based organizations
advocating for democratically funded elections. We are proud of our national reputation, but we
are all Mainers, and our mission has always been with and for the people of this state.

We are strongly opposed to LD 300 for the following reasons.

First, this bill would substitute the legislature's judgment for the clearly expressed will of the
voters. The gubernatorial funding system is a fundamental part of the Clean Election program
approved by voters in 1996 and again in 2015. Where the people have spoken loudly, clearly,
and repeatedly, we urge you to respect their decision. We respectfully point out that the sponsor
of this bill, Representative Sutton, was the driving force behind the political action committee
that fought a losing fight against the citizen initiative. It is certainly her prerogative to continue
that fight here in this committee, but we urge you to stand with the people of Maine and reject
this bill.

Second, we know from thousands of conversations with Maine voters that they want a strong
Clean Elections law as one response to a political system that seems increasingly out of touch.
From our public opinion polling, we also know that Mainers specifically support the Clean
Election option for gubernatorial candidates. In fact, our most recent poll showed that when
presented with an unbiased explanation of the public funding program, 71% of respondents felt
that gubernatorial candidates should be *required* to use (48%) or have the *option* to use Clean
Elections to fund their run for governor (see attached).

Third, the purposes served by the public funding option are extremely important in gubernatorial
elections – certainly no less than in legislative races. Gubernatorial elections are expensive to
run, making it much more difficult for a candidate of modest means to wage a successful
campaign using only private funding. Each gubernatorial cycle we have seen one or more

privately funded candidates with longstanding ties to business and/or PAC contributors, millions of dollars of their own funds – or both. In addition, the large contributions now permitted – \$3,200 per contributor or \$6,400 for a contributor and spouse – raise serious risks of favoritism or the appearance of undue influence. This is especially true with the increasingly common practice where contributors bundle together multiple contributions from business associates.

Fourth, it is very difficult to qualify for gubernatorial public funding. To qualify for just the base amount, a 2018 gubernatorial candidate will need to collect at least 3,200 qualifying contributions. Since 2002, 78 candidates have registered to run for governor in Maine. Only ten have qualified for Clean Elections funding, and there have been only six candidates in the general election who used Clean Elections.

118 members of the 128th Legislature were elected using Clean Elections – 63.4 percent. Legislative candidates value the system very highly because it works well for them. Continuing to use public funding at this rate, while eliminating Clean Elections for gubernatorial candidates, would reflect poorly on the legislature. It would send the message to the public that legislators care more about their own elections than about the public support for Clean Elections and the ideals that it serves.

Gubernatorial Candidates Who Used Clean Elections			
Republican	Green Independent	Democratic	Unenrolled
James D. Libby (2002)	Jonathan Carter (2002)	Pat McGowan (2010)	Barbara Merrill (2006)
Peter Mills (2006)	Pat LaMarche (2004)	Elizabeth Mitchell (2010)	
Chandler Woodcock (2006)	Patrick Quinlan (2010)*		
Peter Mills (2010)			
*Did not qualify			

Former Maine Republican Party Chair Rick Bennett provided a statement a few years ago when a similar proposal was considered. He opposed removing gubernatorial candidates from MCEA eligibility, saying “I suspect that one day we will elect a Clean Elections governor.” We appreciate Rick Bennett’s support and continue to believe that it would be a good day in Maine if we can see a Clean Elections governor in the Blaine House.

For all these reasons, we ask you to report out LD 300 ought not to pass. On behalf of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections, I am happy to take any questions you may have now or at the work session.

Election	Candidate	Party	Expenditure Totals	Financing
2002 ELECTION	Baldacci John E.	DEMOCRATIC	\$1,456,716	Private Funding
	Cianchette Peter E.	REPUBLICAN	\$1,274,489	Private Funding
	Carter Jonathan	GREEN INDEPENDENT	\$925,865	Clean Elections
	Flanagan David T.	UNENROLLED	\$756,890	Private Funding
	Libby James D.	REPUBLICAN	\$327,867	Clean Elections
	Wathen Daniel E.	REPUBLICAN	\$38,423	Private Funding
	Pingree Chellie	DEMOCRATIC	\$34,948	Private Funding
	Michael John M.	UNENROLLED	\$8,178	Private Funding
	Kenney Steven F.	UNENROLLED	\$3,799	Private Funding
	Napier Phillip M.	UNENROLLED	\$2,908	Private Funding
	Hathaway W J.	REPUBLICAN	\$1,674	Private Funding
	Jenkins John T.	UNENROLLED	\$1,621	Private Funding
	Farsaci Steven J.	GREEN INDEPENDENT	\$1,608	Private Funding
	Martin Elwin L.	UNENROLLED	\$0	Private Funding
	McKenzie Jeffrey A.	REPUBLICAN	\$0	Private Funding
2006 ELECTION	Woodcock Chandler E.	REPUBLICAN	\$1,325,373	Clean Elections
	Baldacci John E.	DEMOCRATIC	\$1,313,337	Private Funding
	LaMarche Patricia	GREEN INDEPENDENT	\$1,127,129	Clean Elections
	Merrill Barbara E.	UNENROLLED	\$904,079	Clean Elections
	Mills S Peter	REPUBLICAN	\$249,964	Clean Elections
	Emery David F.	REPUBLICAN	\$179,054	Private Funding
	Cianchette Peter	REPUBLICAN	\$17,626	Private Funding
	Michael John M.	UNENROLLED	\$12,629	Private Funding
	Jones David John	UNENROLLED	\$8,673	Private Funding
	Miller Christopher F.	DEMOCRATIC	\$3,905	Private Funding
	Vachon J Martin	REPUBLICAN	\$2,391	Private Funding
	Mills Bobby	UNENROLLED	\$2,065	Private Funding
	Jenkins John T.	UNENROLLED	\$459	Private Funding
	Hammer Alex	UNENROLLED	\$389	Private Funding
	Bizier Robert M.	DEMOCRATIC	\$0	Private Funding
	Coyne Bruce W.	UNENROLLED	\$0	Private Funding
	Fleming Bruce A	UNENROLLED	\$0	Private Funding
	Loura Shawn	UNENROLLED	\$0	Private Funding
	NaPier Phillip Morris	UNENROLLED	\$0	Private Funding
	Oden Nancy	UNENROLLED	\$0	Private Funding
	Sanborn Jeffrey D.	UNENROLLED	\$0	Private Funding

2010 Election	Otten Leslie B.	REPUBLICAN	\$2,760,709	Private Funding
	Cutler Eliot R.	UNENROLLED	\$2,206,300	Private Funding
	Mitchell Elizabeth H.	DEMOCRATIC	\$1,909,408	Clean Elections
	LePage Paul R.	REPUBLICAN	\$1,385,663	Private Funding
	Scarcelli Rosa Walton	DEMOCRATIC	\$824,614	Private Funding
	Poliquin Bruce L.	REPUBLICAN	\$753,962	Private Funding
	McGowan Patrick K.	DEMOCRATIC	\$670,834	Clean Elections
	Mills S Peter	REPUBLICAN	\$644,522	Clean Elections
	Moody Shawn H.	UNENROLLED	\$566,459	Private Funding
	Rowe G Steven	DEMOCRATIC	\$549,754	Private Funding
	Abbott Steven W.	REPUBLICAN	\$408,638	Private Funding
	Beardsley William H.	REPUBLICAN	\$315,194	Private Funding
	Jacobson Matthew C.	REPUBLICAN	\$172,553	Private Funding
	Richardson John G.	DEMOCRATIC	\$82,382	Private Funding
	Scott Kevin L.	UNENROLLED	\$26,194	Private Funding
	Williams Lynne	GREEN INDEPENDENT	\$16,626	Private Funding
	Hill Dawn	DEMOCRATIC	\$11,886	Private Funding
	Bailey Samme	UNENROLLED	\$9,906	Private Funding
	Dion Donna J.	DEMOCRATIC	\$4,838	Private Funding
	Vachon J Martin	UNENROLLED	\$1,488	Private Funding
	Hammer Alex	UNENROLLED	\$1,337	Private Funding
	Jenkins John T.	UNENROLLED	\$255	Private Funding
	Albert Daniel Roy	UNENROLLED	\$0	Private Funding
	Braley Edwin I.	UNENROLLED	\$0	Private Funding
	Cambron Christopher Paul	UNENROLLED	\$0	Private Funding
	Cooper-Pete Beverly	UNENROLLED	\$0	Private Funding
	Edgerton Augustus J.	UNENROLLED	\$0	Private Funding
	Heath Michael S.	UNENROLLED	\$0	Private Funding
	Whitcomb John	UNENROLLED	\$0	Private Funding
	Manson Eriq E.	DEMOCRATIC	none reported	Private Funding
	Quinlan Patrick Scott	GREEN INDEPENDENT	none reported	Clean Elections
	Truman Peter	DEMOCRATIC	none reported	Private Funding
2014 ELECTION	MICHAUD MICHAEL H.	DEMOCRATIC	\$3,076,206	Private Funding
	CUTLER ELIOT R.	UNENROLLED	\$3,038,437	Private Funding
	LEPAGE PAUL R.	REPUBLICAN	\$1,986,841	Private Funding
	Woods Stephen M	DEMOCRATIC	\$50,000	Private Funding
	Schultheis Lee W.	UNENROLLED	\$15,479	Private Funding
	Slagger David Allen	UNENROLLED	\$400	Private Funding

	GALE CHARLES C	UNENROLLED	\$0	Private Funding
	VACHON J MARTIN	UNENROLLED	\$0	Private Funding
	Eldridge Adam Mark	UNENROLLED	none reported	Private Funding
	Hammer Alex	UNENROLLED	none reported	Private Funding
2018 ELECTION	Stubenrod Deril V.	REPUBLICAN	none reported	Private Funding

Half of Maine voters polled feel that candidates for Governor should be *required* to use Clean Elections for campaign funding, while remaining opinions are split between the *option* to use Clean Elections and private donations.

In 1996 Maine voters passed the Maine Clean Election Act into law. Since 2000, qualified candidates for state office who limit their spending receive limited public funds to run for office rather than relying on campaign donations from private sources. Last November, voters passed a new Clean Elections initiative to strengthen this voluntary program while increasing transparency and accountability.

Thinking about races for Governor, which one of the following statements comes closest to your own point of view?

