



Testimony before the Portland City Council

Re: 42-day pre-election report

August 13, 2018

Good evening, my name is Anna Kellar and I am the Executive Director of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections. 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.

We are supporting the addition of a 42-day pre-election report and thank Councilor Ray for her leadership on this issue.

Transparency is a key value of a functioning democracy. The disclosure of campaign contributions creates and enhances the accountability of elected officials to their constituents.

For transparency to be meaningful, it is important to provide campaign finance information at the point when it is useful to voters. The current rules do not fill that need. By providing information on candidate's fundraising and spending at the point that voters are beginning to consider their choices, this disclosure encourages informed voting. And by not waiting only until the last few days before an election to provide that information, this measure would promote calm and accurate reporting on campaign contributions in the media.

This measure would make Portland candidates have the same expectations of transparency that state legislative candidates do. Given that City Council districts are larger, and often more hotly and expensively contested than state legislative races, this only makes sense.

We hope that you will send this common-sense measure to Portland's voters to approve in November.