



Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

LD 1187, An Act To Apply the Same Auditing Standards to All Candidates and Political Action Committees

March 25, 2019

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

Maine Citizens for Clean Elections supports LD 1187.

We believe the requirement to randomly audit both candidate campaigns and political action committees will raise the level of compliance and strengthen public confidence in our campaign finance laws. We thank Rep. Riseman for bringing this bill forward.

It is appropriate to audit both privately funded candidates and Clean Election candidates alike. LD 1187 is fair in its requirement to audit equal percentages of each type of campaign.

Clean Election and privately funded candidates are subject to important laws and rules that provide transparency and eliminate opportunities for corruption and its appearance. Political action committees are vehicles for massive amounts of money in politics. In all cases, the public has the right to know who donates to campaigns, who is paid by campaigns, and how funds are spent.

Because disclosure requirements are the foundation that allow for enforcement, the public has a reasonable expectation that reporting will be accurate, thorough, and timely. Setting a standard for audits will clearly convey to all campaigns and PACs the importance of careful bookkeeping, proper document retention, and other best practices of campaign reporting.

Audits will help us see how well we're doing when it comes to routine compliance with campaign finance laws. They may verify that campaigns are compliant with all aspects of the law. They may expose sloppy bookkeeping and poor record-keeping or reveal actual violations

of the law and rules. The results of the audits may suggest improvements to our disclosure laws and the rules that govern reporting.

In short, random audits will strengthen accountability and increase compliance. We encourage a vote of Ought to Pass on LD 1187.