

Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

LD 780, An Act To Change Municipal Campaign Contribution Limits

February 25th, 2019

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

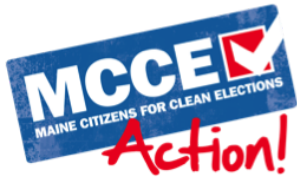
Thank you for the opportunity to testify on LD 780, An Act To Change Municipal Campaign Contribution Limits

My name is Anna Kellar. 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 20 years, and one of the nation's most respected state-based organizations advocating for democratically funded elections. We are proud of our national reputation and our commitment to the people of this state.

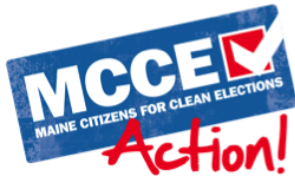
We support LD 780 because we believe that each of us deserves an equal say in our political process - no less, no more. Currently, individual campaign contribution limits are set at \$350 for legislative candidates and \$750 for other candidates (before adjusting for inflation), including those for county and municipal offices. Before 2011, when the legislature increased individual campaign contribution limits for county and municipal offices to the current level, contribution limits for municipal and legislative candidates were equal. LD 780 will bring municipal individual campaign contribution limits back in line with those for legislative candidates. We see no reason that justifies the higher limit for municipal candidates relative to legislative offices. We believe municipal candidates can run viable campaigns under the lower limits, just as legislative candidates do. We believe that what works for the legislative candidates should work for municipal candidates, as well.

We believe that the long-term solution that would reduce municipal candidates' need to raise a lot of money is a Clean Elections system for municipalities. However, before we get there, LD



780 will reduce the effort that municipal candidates expend to court well-to-do members of their community -- and consequently reduce the perception that, once elected, those office-holders are favoring the interests of those wealthy donors over the interests of ordinary constituents.

LD 780 is a common sense solution to ensure that legislative and municipal candidates are meeting the same fundraising contributions limits.



Supplement to testimony in support of LD780

Contributions to municipal candidates in recent Portland, Lewiston and Bangor elections

Data drawn from required disclosures filed by candidates.

2016 City of Portland, City Council

Candidates for City Council	Money raised	Number of individual contributions Aboved \$400
Matthew Coffey	\$528.65	0
Jon Hinck	\$4,904.16	0
Pious Ali	\$28,878.52	unknown*
Brain Baston	\$8,181.04	1

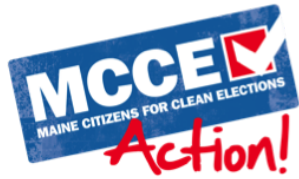
*Page missing from records on file with Portland City Clerk

2017 City of Portland, City Council

Candidates for City Council	Money raised	Number of individual contributions aboved \$400
Joel Burnelle	\$4,840.03	0
Marpheen S Chann-Berry	\$1,029.49	0
Kimberly Cook	\$13,710.22	1
Justin Costa	\$4,903.05	0
Craigs Doris	\$1,162.9	0
Jill C Duson	\$14,900.36	5
Bree LaCasse	\$20,952.32	1

2018 City of Portland, City Council

Candidates for City Council	Money Raised	Number of individuals contributions above \$400
Joey Brunelle	\$6,338.17	0



Matt Coffey	\$260	0
Spencer Thibodeau	\$16,403.01	9
Nicholas M. Mavodones	\$41,792	36
Belinda S. Ray	\$7,230.93	5

Lewiston Mayor Race 2017

Candidates	Money raised	Number of individual contributions aboved \$400
Ronald W. Potvin	\$0	0
Charles A. Soule	\$0	0
Mark Cayer	\$6,358	1
Ben Chin	\$12,112.18	2
Shane Bouchard	\$2,058	1

Bangor City Council 2018

Candidates for City Council	Money raised	Number of individual contributions aboved \$400
Gretchen Schaefer	\$381.76	0
David Nealley	\$1,071.44	1
Sarah Nichols	\$294.54	0
Amy Lee Tidd	\$730	0
Allen Braun	\$0	0
Nicole Golden-Bouchard	\$1,572.55	1
John Cashwell	\$0	0