



Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

LD 929 An Act Regarding the Use of Maine Clean Election Act Funds for Salaries

Monday, March 11th, 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 929, An Act Regarding the Use of Maine Clean Election Act Funds for Salaries.

Maine Citizens for Clean Elections opposes LD 929. While we understand the rationale behind the bill, we believe it is unwise policy. It arbitrarily ties the salaries of campaign workers to that of the governor of Maine in an attempt to limit what is paid in Clean Election funds. We don't think it wise to attempt to micromanage Clean Election campaigns in statute. At the same time, we believe strongly that Clean Election funds must only be used for legitimate campaign-related purposes, and we appreciate the sponsors' effort to ensure that expenditures are reasonable.

We suggest that a more appropriate way to address this problem is through a small change in the 24-hour reporting requirements. Currently, some routine or recurring expenditures such as that for salaries are not included in the 24-hour reports, even if they are higher than the reporting threshold. That exception should not apply if there is a significant deviation in the salary or consulting fee. Adopting a 10% deviation threshold would ensure that a marked increase in an otherwise routine expenditure in the final days of a campaign is disclosed in a timely way. The press and the public have a right to this information and should not have to wait until after Election Day to have it.

Thank you for your consideration.