



Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

LD 1290, An Act To Repeal the Maine Clean Election Act and Direct the Savings to Be Used for the State's Contribution toward the Costs of Education Funding

Friday, April 24, 2015

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

My name is Ed Youngblood, and I am here to testify on behalf of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections. MCCE is a nonpartisan organization that works in the public interest to educate the public and to defend and improve the Maine Clean Election Act and related campaign finance law.

As many of you know, I represented the people of Brewer in the Senate during the 120th and 121st Legislatures, and again in the 126th Legislature.

I strongly support the Clean Elections system, and I oppose LD 1290.

Last year over 1,000 volunteers from every corner of Maine collected 86,000 signatures to support a citizen initiative. This bill will appear on the ballot this November and will strengthen and restore Clean Elections, improve transparency, and enhance compliance with the law.

We were frankly overwhelmed with the public support this initiative received when we gathered signatures. Clearly the people of Maine want a strong Clean Elections system.

Why do we need Clean Elections? We live in a time when the public's confidence in government is being tested. We need to restore public confidence and reassure the people that their government is accountable to them. We need to make sure that we have a government of, by, and for the people.

The Maine Clean Elections system provides accountability. The Clean Elections system keeps the voters in the driver's seat, which is where they belong. It helps make sure that our state government is responsive to the voters, not the wealthy contributors.

I used Clean Elections in each of my Senate campaigns. I understand that ten of the members of this Committee were elected using the Maine Clean Election system in 2014.

Some of you probably used the Clean Election system because it gives you freedom to vote your conscience instead of worrying about what a large contributor might expect from you in return.

Some of you probably used Clean Elections because you wanted to campaign out in the community, speaking with your neighbors, listening to their concerns, and knocking on doors. You didn't want to spend all your time calling lobbyists and asking for money.

Maybe some of you used Clean Elections because, even though you have a lot to offer as a lawmaker, you don't have a lot of family, friends, or business associates who could pay for your campaign, or maybe you simply don't like asking for money.

There are many reasons to use the Clean Elections system.

Meanwhile, the tide of big money keeps flowing in this country. There are more PACs, Super-PACS, dark money, and independent expenditures than ever before. All this money threatens to come between the voters and their elected representatives.

Now is not the time to repeal Clean Elections – it is time to strengthen Clean Elections. It is time to restore the will of the voters, and to make sure our government is accountable. We need Clean Elections now more than ever.

We ask you to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 1290.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to address any questions you may have.

From: **John Papagiannis** Johnny@everyvoice.org
Subject: Info on public financing
Date: April 21, 2015 at 11:32 AM
To: Edward Youngblood edmyoungblood@gmail.com

Hey Ed,

Attached is a polling memo we did with Democracy Corps after the 2014 election. I think you'll be able to pull some useful public opinion from there that shows that people want the problem addressed and are ready for solutions (not taking a step back by repealing, etc.).

And here are the places that have public financing, along with some potential new places that are working on it:

A number of states offer public financing (in some form) for governor, etc. They can be found here: <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/public-financing-of-campaigns-overview.aspx>

States with full public financing for statewide and legislative races:

Arizona
Connecticut

Judicial public financing:

West Virginia

Municipalities:

New Haven, CT
New York City
Los Angeles, CA
Long Beach, CA
Oakland, CA
San Francisco, CA
Albuquerque, NM
Sante Fe, NM
Boulder, CO
Austin, TX
Miami-Dade County, FL
Montgomery County, MD (just passed at the end of 2014)

Other:

*Some type of
Public Financing of
Campaigns*

Arizona
Arkansas
Connecticut
Florida
Hawaii
Idaho
Iowa
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Montana
Nebraska
New Jersey
New Mexico
North Carolina
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Rhode Island

Utah
Vermont
Virginia
②5 Wisconsin