

# Maine Citizens for Clean Elections

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TO: The Honorable Senator Lisa T. Marraché, Senate Chair  
The Honorable Representative John L. Patrick, House Chair  
The Joint Standing Committee on Legal and Veterans Affairs

DATE: April 30, 2007

RE: **LD 1507** "An Act Regarding Political Activities of Corporations"

## **Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) testifies in support of LD 1507.**

MCCE believes that the time is right to begin a public conversation about the role of corporations in Maine politics, and we applaud the sponsors of this bill for doing just that.

We believe that corporations should not be able to make contributions to either candidates or to political action committees (PACs). Such bans are not constitutionally controversial, and are in place in many jurisdictions. The rationale for such bans is explained in "Writing Reform, A Guide to Drafting State and Local Campaign Finance Reform Laws," published by the Brennan Center for Justice. \*

...the Supreme Court recognized that states have a compelling interest in seeing that the "substantial aggregations of wealth amassed by the special advantages which go with the corporate form of organization . . . not be converted into political 'war chests' which could be used to incur political debts from legislators." *FEC v. National Right to Work Comm.*, 459 U.S. 197, 207 (1982) ("NRWC").

In fact, according to the Brennan Center, the federal ban on contributions to candidates from corporate treasuries is the **only** "source limit" that has explicitly been upheld by the Supreme Court.

We urge the committee to carefully consider the role of corporations in Maine's political system and amend the law in ways that strengthen the ability of Maine people to govern themselves.

\* *Find Writing Reform at*

[http://www.brennancenter.org/dynamic/subpages/whole\\_manual\\_2004.pdf](http://www.brennancenter.org/dynamic/subpages/whole_manual_2004.pdf)

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*Maine Citizens for Clean Elections is a nonpartisan coalition of organizations that have worked together to pass Maine's Clean Election Act and that continue to work together to support and defend its use and the integrity of its implementation. Its members include AARP, Common Cause Maine, the League of Women Voters of Maine, Maine AFL-CIO, Maine People's Alliance and Peace Action Maine.*