

# 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 23, 2007

RE: **LD 1729** "An Act to Allow Contributors to Candidates Financed by the Maine Clean Election Fund to Submit Qualifying Contributions Online"

## **Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) testifies neither for nor against LD 1729.**

This bill provides that Qualifying Contributions may be made by credit card over the Internet.

MCCE appreciates Representative Trinward's desire to bring the qualifying process into the 21<sup>st</sup> century! Certainly having an online credit card option would be convenient for many candidates and voters, but it is not essential.

We caution the committee against streamlining the qualifying process to the point that adequate accountability and/or anti-fraud measures may not be in place. Collecting money over the internet is not our area of expertise, however, so we would look to the Ethics Commission and relevant state agencies to advise on necessary safeguards.

We also wonder whether, based on the success that federal candidates have had raising small private donations from many contributors through the internet, the potential exists for this change to have a such a dramatic effect on the qualifying process as to indicate a re-evaluation of the minimum number of QCs required for certification in all races.

We understand that the Ethics Commission will propose allowing credit or debit card payment for Qualifying Contributions and we are not opposed to this change. But accepting online Qualifying Contributions seems to be a more complicated undertaking and we urge the committee to use appropriate care and common sense in moving forward with this idea.