

# Maine Citizens for Clean Elections

P.O. Box 18187, Portland, ME 04112  
www.maineclipselections.org  
info@maineclipselections.org

(207) 664-0696 Ann Luther, Co-chair  
(207) 879-7440 Alison Smith, Co-chair  
(207) 799-1596 Jill Ward, Program Director

---

July 28, 2008

To: Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices

Re: **New Rule on Seed Money**

Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) supports the proposed increase in the seed money cap from \$50,000 to \$100,000 for gubernatorial candidates. This change helps ensure that the Clean Election option appeals to Maine's strongest, most viable gubernatorial candidates.

Seed money is limited private money that candidates may raise early in their candidacy to get their campaign off the ground and successfully fulfill the requirements of the qualifying process. The contribution limit for seed money is \$100 per donor. Corporations and political action committees are barred from making seed money contributions.

Seed money is the only money available to Clean Election candidates between the time they declare for office and prepare to run a statewide race and the time when public funds will be distributed in the spring of 2010. For some candidates, this might be a year-long period.

It is appropriate to revisit the \$50,000 cap which was set more than a decade ago when the Maine Clean Election Act (MCEA) was first drafted. The change is in keeping with the higher costs for everything from gasoline to printing, as well as the significantly higher qualifying threshold that 2010 candidates will be asked to meet.

Raising the seed money cap does not increase the cost of the Clean Election program. And any unspent seed money is deducted from the initial MCEA distribution, ensuring that candidates start out on a level playing field.

MCCE believes an increase to \$100,000 is reasonable. Candidates must be able to raise and spend adequate resources to lay the groundwork for a successful campaign. The existing individual contribution and source limits ensure that this change will not allow big special interest money into Clean Election races.

We appreciate the Commission undertaking this rule change and support its adoption.

---

*Maine Citizens for Clean Elections is a nonpartisan coalition of organizations and individuals who worked together to help pass Maine's Clean Election Act and who 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 Council of Churches, Maine People's Alliance, NAACP-Portland, and Peace Action Maine.*