



TO: The Honorable Senator Nancy B. Sullivan, Senate Chair
The Honorable Representative Pamela Jabar Trinward, House Chair
The Joint Standing Committee on Legal and Veterans Affairs

DATE: March 30, 2009

RE: LD 949, "An Act To Reduce the Number of Qualifying Contributions Required for Special Elections under the Maine Clean Election Act," Representative Blanchard, sponsor

Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) opposes LD 949.

This bill cuts in half the number of Qualifying Contributions needed by legislative candidates in special elections, reducing the Senate requirement from 150 to 75 and the House requirement from 50 to 25.

MCCE believes that the qualifying hurdle for special election candidates should not be lowered. There is no difference in either the number of voters who are eligible to make Qualifying Contributions or in the distribution amounts that the candidate will receive. Special election candidates may have a shorter length of time to collect Qualifying Contributions and to campaign, but they often benefit from less competition for volunteers.

Most special election candidates participate in Clean Elections. The system allows for a 100% focus on voter contact which is especially valuable to special election candidates. Collecting Qualifying Contributions is an important and beneficial avenue for voter contact. In 2006, 12 of 13 special election candidates chose and successfully qualified for public funding. In the one special election held this year, both of the candidates used public funding.

We see no compelling evidence to support lowering the qualifying threshold, and we urge an "Ought Not to Pass" vote on LD 949.

Thank you.

Alison Smith, Co-Chair 879-7440

Member Organizations

AARP Maine, Common Cause Maine, EqualityMaine, League of Women Voters of Maine, League of Young Voters, Maine AFL-CIO, Maine Council of Churches, Maine People's Alliance/Maine People's Resource Center, Maine Women's Lobby, NAACP-Portland, Natural Resources Council of Maine, Peace Action Maine