TO: The Honorable Craig Hickman
                The Honorable Laura Supica, Co-Chairs
                Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

DATE: Wednesday, April 26, 2023

RE: LD 1466, "An Act to Fund Adult Intellectual Disability and Autism Spectrum Disorder
                Services by Eliminating Certain Tax Funding from the Maine Clean Election Fund"

Good morning Senator Hickman and Representative Supica.

My name is Anna Kellar. I'm a resident of Portland. I am here today as the Executive Director of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections. I am testifying in opposition to LD 1466.

For over 25 years MCCE has advocated for Maine's Clean Election Act public funding system. We were there at the start to advocate for its enactment in 1996, during the early years when participation was ramping up, when budget challenges and court decisions threatened to weaken the program, and up to today where it is well-established and continues to enjoy broad support among the candidates and the general public.

LD 1466 guts the largest source of funding to the citizen-initiated Maine Clean Election Fund. The result would be to destroy Clean Elections, which is a popular and well-used public funding option for qualified candidates for Maine's highest offices.

In the 1996 referendum that created Clean Elections, and in the subsequent referendum in 2015 that amended the law, Maine people identified specific funding sources to pay for the program.

No doubt there are many needs in the state of Maine that merit funding in the state budget. Democracy is one of them. In the case of Clean Elections, Maine voters had the wisdom not to leave funding to chance. Maine people continue to value this program, and so should the Legislature. The language in our law is not a mere suggestion.

LD 1466 is a brazen attempt to gut Clean Elections and a slap in the face to Maine voters. It should be soundly defeated.

Please vote Ought Not to Pass.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions from the Committee.