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An Act To Amend the Maine Clean Election Act To Equalize the Qualifying Period for All Candidates and To Increase the Number of Required Contributions for Candidates to the Legislature

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 21-A MRSA §1122, sub-§8, as amended by PL 2001, c. 465, §3, is further amended to read:

8. Qualifying period. "Qualifying period" means the following.

A. For a gubernatorial participating candidate, the qualifying period begins November 1st immediately preceding the election year and ends at 5:00 p.m. on April 15th of the election year ~~unless the candidate is unenrolled, in which case the period ends at 5:00 p.m. on June 2nd of the election year.~~

B. For State Senate or State House of Representatives participating candidates, the qualifying period begins January 1st of the election year and ends at 5:00 p.m. on April 15th of that election year ~~unless the candidate is unenrolled, in which case the period ends at 5:00 p.m. on June 2nd of the election year.~~

Sec. 2. 21-A MRSA §1125, sub-§3, ¶B, as enacted by IB 1995, c. 1, §17, is amended to read:

B. For a candidate for the State Senate, at least ~~150~~195 verified registered voters from the candidate's electoral division must support the candidacy by providing a qualifying contribution to that candidate; or

Sec. 3. 21-A MRSA §1125, sub-§3, ¶C, as enacted by IB 1995, c. 1, §17, is amended to read:

C. For a candidate for the State House of Representatives, at least ~~50~~65 verified registered voters from the candidate's electoral division must support the candidacy by providing a qualifying contribution to that candidate.

Sec. 4. 21-A MRSA §1125, sub-§10, as amended by PL 2007, c. 443, Pt. B, §6, is further amended to read:

10. Candidate not enrolled in a party. An unenrolled candidate who submits the required number of qualifying contributions and other required documents under subsection 4 by 5:00 p.m. on April 15th preceding the primary election and who is certified is eligible for revenues from the fund in the same amounts and at the same time as an uncontested primary election candidate and a general election candidate as specified in subsections 7 and 8. ~~Otherwise, an unenrolled candidate must submit the required number of qualifying contributions and the other required documents under subsection 4 by~~

~~5:00 p.m. on June 2nd preceding the general election.~~ If certified, the candidate is eligible for revenues from the fund in the same amounts as a general election candidate, as specified in subsection 8. Revenues for the general election must be distributed to the candidate no later than 3 days after certification.

SUMMARY

This bill equalizes the qualifying period for unenrolled candidates and party candidates under the Maine Clean Election Act by requiring all participating candidates to qualify by April 15th of the election year. The bill also increases by 30% the number of qualifying contributions a Clean Election Act candidate for the State Senate or State House of Representatives must obtain.