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An Act To Alter the Distribution of Maine Clean Election Act Funds

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

Sec. 1. 21-A MRSA §1125, sub-§3, ¶A, as amended by PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. F, §1 and c. 443, Pt. B, §6, is further amended to read:

A. For a gubernatorial candidate, at least ~~3,250~~750 verified registered voters of this State must support the candidacy by providing a qualifying contribution to that candidate;

Sec. 2. 21-A MRSA §1125, sub-§3, ¶B, as amended by PL 2009, c. 286, §6, is further amended to read:

B. For a candidate for the State Senate, at least ~~175~~60 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 amended by PL 2009, c. 286, §7, is further amended to read:

C. For a candidate for the State House of Representatives, at least ~~60~~25 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-§6, as amended by PL 2011, c. 389, §54, is further amended to read:

6. Restrictions on contributions and expenditures for certified candidates. After certification, a candidate must limit the candidate's campaign expenditures and obligations, including outstanding obligations, to the revenues distributed to the candidate from the fund and, except as provided in subsection 6-F, may not accept any contributions unless specifically authorized by the commission. Candidates may also accept and spend interest earned on fund revenues in campaign bank accounts. All revenues distributed to a certified candidate from the fund must be used for campaign-related purposes. The candidate, the treasurer, the candidate's committee authorized pursuant to section 1013-A, subsection 1 or any agent of the candidate and committee may not use these revenues for any but campaign-related purposes. The commission shall publish guidelines outlining permissible campaign-related expenditures.

Sec. 5. 21-A MRSA §1125, sub-§6-F is enacted to read:

6-F. Additional contributions authorized. After certification pursuant to subsection 5, a candidate for Governor, the State Senate or the State House of Representatives may continue to collect contributions in the amount of \$5 from verified registered voters from the candidate's electoral division. A voter who provides a qualifying contribution during the qualifying period to a candidate in a contested primary election may, after the date of the primary election, provide an additional \$5 contribution to that candidate after certification pursuant to subsection 5.

Sec. 6. 21-A MRSA §1125, sub-§8-A, as amended by PL 2011, c. 558, §§6 and 7, is further amended to read:

8-A. Amount of fund distribution. By September 1, ~~2011~~2015, and at least every 2 years after that date, the commission shall determine the amount of funds to be distributed to participating candidates in legislative elections based on the type of election and office. In making this determination, the commission may take into consideration any relevant information, including but not limited to:

A. The range of campaign spending by candidates for that office in the ~~2~~ preceding ~~election~~election; and

B. The Consumer Price Index published monthly by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics and any other significant changes in the costs of campaigning such as postage or fuel.

Before making any determination, the commission shall provide notice of the determination and an opportunity to comment to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, all floor leaders, the members of the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over legal affairs and persons who have expressed interest in receiving notices of opportunities to comment on the commission's rules and policies. The commission shall present at a public meeting the basis for the commission's final determination.

For contested gubernatorial primary elections, the amount of revenues distributed is ~~\$400,000~~\$200,000 per candidate in a primary election. For uncontested gubernatorial primary elections the amount of revenues distributed is ~~\$200,000~~\$100,000. For contested and uncontested gubernatorial general elections, the amount of revenues distributed is ~~\$600,000~~\$300,000 per candidate in the general election.

Sec. 7. 21-A MRSA §1125, sub-§8-B is enacted to read:

8-B. Supplemental distributions. The amount of funds distributed to candidates who collected additional contributions in accordance with subsection 6-F is as follows.

A. For contested primary elections for candidates for the State Senate or the State House of Representatives, the amount of the supplemental distribution of revenues is an amount equal to \$55 for each additional qualifying contribution collected in excess of those collected pursuant to subsection 3, paragraph B or C. The maximum overall amount of total distributions in a contested primary election is \$11,100 for a candidate for the State Senate and \$2,100 for a candidate for the State House of Representatives.

B. For contested general elections for the State Senate, the amount of the supplemental distribution of revenues is an amount equal to \$55 for each qualifying contribution collected in excess of those collected pursuant to subsection 3, paragraph B if that amount was not distributed pursuant to paragraph A, plus an amount equal to \$55 for each additional contribution collected pursuant to subsection 6-F up to a maximum overall distribution of \$36,200 per candidate in the general election.

C. For contested general elections for the State House of Representatives, the amount of the supplemental distribution of revenues is an amount equal to \$55 for each qualifying contribution collected in excess of those collected pursuant to subsection 3, paragraph C if that amount was not distributed pursuant to paragraph A, plus an amount equal to \$55 for each additional contribution collected pursuant to subsection 6-F up to a maximum overall distribution of \$7,800 per candidate in the general election.

D. For uncontested legislative general elections, the amount of the supplemental distribution of revenues distributed to candidates for the State Senate or the State House of Representatives is \$22 for each qualifying contribution collected in excess of those collected pursuant to subsection 3, paragraph B or C up to a maximum overall distribution of \$12,000 for a candidate for the State Senate and a maximum overall distribution of \$2,600 for a candidate for the State House of Representatives.

E. For contested gubernatorial primary elections, the amount of the supplemental distribution of revenues is an amount equal to \$55 for each additional qualifying contribution collected in excess of those collected pursuant to subsection 3, paragraph A up to a maximum overall distribution of \$350,000 per candidate in the primary election.

F. For gubernatorial general elections, the amount of the supplemental distribution of revenues is an amount equal to \$55 for each qualifying contribution collected in excess of those collected pursuant to subsection 3, paragraph A if that amount was not distributed pursuant to paragraph E, plus an amount equal to \$55 for each additional contribution collected pursuant to subsection 6-F up to a maximum overall distribution of \$750,000 per candidate in the general election.

Sec. 8. Distribution to legislative candidates for 2014 election cycle. The Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices shall set the amount of initial distributions for candidates for the State Senate and the State House of Representatives for the 2014 election cycle in an amount equal to 50% of the amount distributed to candidates in the 2012 election cycle. These initial distributions when considered with supplemental distributions made in accordance with the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 21-A, section 1125, subsection 8-B must be used to determine the maximum total distributions to legislative candidates as prescribed by Title 21-A, section 1125.

SUMMARY

This bill decreases the number of qualifying contributions required for legislative and gubernatorial candidates to collect to become certified as Maine Clean Election Act candidates. It provides that candidates may continue to collect qualifying contributions in order to receive supplemental distributions from the Maine Clean Election Fund. The bill establishes a maximum amount of total distributions from the fund for all candidates. Finally, the bill establishes the amount of initial distributions for the 2014 election cycle.