

April 25, 2023

Sen. Craig Hickman, Chair
Rep. Laura Supica, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs
Maine State Legislature
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: LD 1590 An Act to Require Disclosure of Campaign Funding Sources

Chair Hickman, Chair Supica, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs: My name is David O'Brien and I am Policy Director for RepresentUs, the nation's leading nonpartisan anti-corruption organization. RepresentUs is submitting testimony today in support of LD 1590.

RepresentUs is a nonpartisan advocacy organization dedicated to the idea that the government should be representative of and accountable to the people. It advocates for policies to strengthen our democracy and provides activists with the resources and training to bring meaningful change.

This bill would bring valuable and necessary transparency into the murky world of campaign spending. It would require the disclosure of donors and original sources of donations to party committees, PACs, and ballot question committees over \$10,000 and for those entities to disclose their top three funders in certain campaign communications.

Since the Supreme Court decided *Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission* in 2010, the amount of dark money spent on American elections has exploded. In the decade after *Citizens United*, \$4.5 billion was spent by non-party independent groups, compared with just \$750 million in the two decades prior.¹ Americans' trust in government is already at near-historic lows,² and the perception that anonymous wealthy donors have more power than voters can only undermine it further.

This bill is a crucial step to strengthen transparency and accountability and will provide voters with valuable information about who is trying to influence their elections. This bill will put Maine

¹ *More money, less transparency: A decade under Citizens United*, Open Secrets (Jan. 14, 2020) (available at <https://www.opensecrets.org/news/reports/a-decade-under-citizens-united>).

² *Public Trust in Government: 1958-2022*, Pew Research Center (June 6, 2022) (available at <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2022/06/06/public-trust-in-government-1958-2022/>).



at the forefront of restoring trust in our democracy and ensuring that elections are decided by votes, not donations.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 1590.

David O’Brien
Policy Director
[RepresentUs](https://www.RepresentUs.org)