



STATE OF MAINE
COMMISSION ON GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS
AND ELECTION PRACTICES
135 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0135

**Testimony of Jonathan Wayne, Executive Director of the
Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices
before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs
March 17, 2025**

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and distinguished members of the committee: my name is Jonathan Wayne, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices. The Commission and its staff are neutral on LD 951. This testimony is intended to provide you with one view on some of the tradeoffs of the bill from our perspective as campaign finance administrators.

If you do a search of contributions over \$10,000 given to PACs, ballot question committees (BQCs), and party committees, you will find hundreds of contributors that have donated money they received from others. If enacted, LD 951 would require contributors like these to find out the original sources of the funds they have contributed and provide that information to Maine PACs, BQCs, and party committees, so those committees can include that original source information in their campaign finance reports.

This reporting would definitely provide the Maine public with more information about the sources of campaign contributions than is currently available. Reasonable minds will differ on the value of that information. The reporting would also increase the administrative burdens on donors giving more than \$10,000 to PACs, BQCs, and party committees. PACs, BQCs, and party committees receiving these \$10,000+ contributions will have to enter more information when they file campaign finance reports. In some cases, these burdens on contributors and committees would be minor. Sometimes, they could be more substantial. It's hard to generalize and predict how it will work out in advance. One thing is for sure: some PACs, BQCs and party committees will object to these new requirements, if enacted. The Legislature may receive an outcry similar to when it imposed contribution limits on some PACs in 2021 (later repealed).

OFFICE LOCATED AT: 45 MEMORIAL CIRCLE, AUGUSTA, MAINE
WEBSITE: WWW.MAINE.GOV/ETHICS

PHONE: (207) 287-4179

FAX: (207) 287-6775

With respect to the privacy concerns expressed at the public hearing, it is worth noting that under LD 951 PACs, BQCs, and party committees are not required to publicly disclose any original source unless that source provided more than \$10,000.

If enacted, LD 951 will require the Commission to make IT changes to its eFiling system so that the original source information may be disclosed to the public. There will be some cost to the General Fund, but we would try to reduce the impact.

I have uploaded as a separate piece of testimony a 12-page list of contributors that gave single contributions of more than \$10,000 to PACs and BQCs in 2022-2024. Some of these contributors gave their own original funds (money earned through commercial activity or compensation). Others gave what LD 951 calls “pass through funds.” If you think it would help, this list will give you an idea of the types of contributors that would need to obtain original source information under LD 951 and provide that to the committees they’ve donated to. FYI - this list does not include contributors to party committees. Thank you.