

Anne M. Gallaudet
Scarborough, Maine

April 30, 2025

Re: LD 1787: An Act to Strengthen the Maine Clean Election Act

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and Honorable Members of the Joint Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

My name is Anne Gallaudet. I am a resident of Scarborough, Maine.

I applaud this bill and hope you will vote “ought to pass” regarding LD 1787.

The Maine Clean Elections Act (MCEA) has the modest nonpartisan but powerful mission of opening the doors to candidates for designated positions to receive funds to run for office if they have community support and negating the need for personal wealth or access to wealth of others to fund their campaign. Candidates who voluntarily choose to participate in Maine’s Clean Elections system can spend more time campaigning and less time on raising funds for their campaign. – for many, a grueling job. MCEA also keeps special interest monies, especially undisclosed, out of elections and thus helps ensure candidates for these key positions will have integrity and not be beholden to donors or business interests. To be clear, it also enriches the candidate pool and prevents public corruption. Recent studies show that candidates from both parties have taken advantage of the clean election funds and participation is increasing from year to year. <https://www.maine.gov/ethics/sites/maine.gov.ethics/files/inline-files/2023%20MCEA%20Study%20Report.pdf>

This bill expands the eligible list of candidates eligible for MCEA funds to include people running for *district attorney, sheriff or country commissioner*. These three officials play critical roles in Maine and influence Mainers’ lives significantly. Indeed, two of these positions – district attorney and sheriff - have significant control over one’s liberty. Without public funding, district attorneys often turn to other attorneys for financial support, and this often means defense attorneys – the very people who will be their adversaries should they be elected. The public needs to and wants to have faith that the candidates will carry out their duties with impartiality and integrity and not be beholden to special interests.

Without the opportunity for public funding, we have clear evidence of where elections costs and partiality are going. Look at the record spending in the 2025 race for the Wisconsin Supreme Court where the richest man in the *world* and *not* a resident of Wisconsin was greatly involved using his personal wealth and bully pulpit.

This bill increases the amount of funds transferred annually to the Maine Clean Elections Fund and raises the contribution limits for gubernatorial seed money to \$500 per individual. These two proposals in my mind should be uncontroversial and in fact reasonable considering anticipated fund shortfalls, the expansion of eligible positions and the unfortunate increasing costs of campaigning in today’s world including in state elections.

I urge you to vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 1787.

Anne Gallaudet, Scarborough, ME