



Richard A. Bennett
Senator, District 18

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

**Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs on
LD 207, An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Qualifying Contributions of
Cash Under the Maine Clean Election Act
February 3, 2025**

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs: I am Senator Rick Bennett of Oxford, and I have the honor of serving 14 communities in Western Maine in the State Senate. I am pleased to sponsor LD 207, "An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Qualifying Contributions of Cash Under the Maine Clean Election Act."

How many of you use the Maine Clean Elections Program to raise money for your campaigns every two years? And if you haven't, yourself, how many of you have contributed to a candidate who was running "clean"?

In 2020, when I decided to run for the Senate again after a brief hiatus. This was the first year that cash contributions could be given, getting rid of the money order hassle. For each of my last three elections, I have run using the clean election program. It is a great way to get out and meet constituents and gain their support and make them invested in your race.

However, in my experience, the most frustrating aspect of the program is the constant confusion and mistakes from constituents regarding the duplicative signature requirements. LD 207 would get rid of the need for the Cash Qualifying Contribution Affirmation Form.

This form requires signatures from donors giving cash to affirm that the money is from their own personal funds and that they did not receive anything in exchange for the donation.



**Maine Clean Election Act
Cash Qualifying Contribution Affirmation Form**

Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices
135 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333
207-287-4179 | www.maine.gov/ethics

I, _____, affirm that I have given _____
(Contributor's printed name) (Candidate's printed name)

\$5.00 in cash from my personal funds to support their qualifying for public Maine Clean Election Act funds for their campaign. I did not receive anything of value in return for making this contribution.

Contributor's Signature

Date

Notice to Circulators: Cash contributors must also sign the Receipt & Acknowledgment (R&A) Form. This signed form must be clipped to the corresponding R&A Form for every contributor giving a cash contribution. Qualifying contributions submitted without both forms appropriately signed are invalid. The circulator affirmation on the corresponding R&A Form applies to the use and circulation of this form.

Falsifying anything on this form is punishable by law.

The problem is that cash donors already have to affirm the contribution is from personal funds and that they did not receive anything in exchange for the contribution when they sign the Receipt and Acknowledgement Form, the form that all donors must sign (see the notice below).

Notice to Contributors:

- Your signature and qualifying contribution of \$5 or more will help the candidate named above to be eligible for public funding from the State to pay for the candidate's campaign.
- By signing below, you affirm that you have used your personal funds to make this contribution and that you have received nothing of value in exchange for your signature and contribution.

When I sent out a mail solicitation this year requesting a \$5 donations on my behalf, at least half of the returned forms had a mistake that had to be rectified. Many people who sent cash signed the Receipt and Acknowledgement Form but did not sign the Cash Qualifying Contribution Affirmation Form. And some people signed the Cash Qualifying Contribution Affirmation Form but not the Receipt and Acknowledgement Form. Additionally, many people who donated with a check signed the Cash Qualifying Contribution Affirmation Form, even though they didn't contribute cash. Despite clear and bolded instructions, people do not seem to know how to contribute correctly.

Based on my experience, the confusion affects older constituents more than it does younger Mainers. This is likely because younger constituents are more comfortable contributing online. Additionally, the print on the Receipt and Acknowledgement Form is small. I suggest it could be made larger and bolded. We should not be disenfranchising our seniors with a hurdle that disqualifies their contributions to legislative campaigns.

I care deeply about the integrity of this program but think there must be a better way to ensure the signatures match than requiring people to sign twice. We do not require both parties on a joint checking account to sign twice and we do not require people who contribute online to do so twice. There must be another way to prevent fraud and make the program work better for all.

Thank you for your consideration. I urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 207.