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Testimony of Rep. David Boyer introducing
LD 855, An Act to Limit Eligibility Under the Maine Clean Election Act
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs
March 17, 2025

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and esteemed colleagues of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, my name is Rep. David Boyer and I am proud to present LD 855, An Act to Limit Eligibility Under the Maine Clean Election Act.

This bill seeks to ease the burden on Maine's general fund caused by the public financing of campaigns in our state. As committee members are aware, the upcoming gubernatorial election could cost taxpayers millions of dollars if just a few candidates participate in the Maine Clean Election Act (MCEA) program.

While public financing has made it easier for individuals from all walks of life to raise funds and run for office, it has failed to reduce the influence of money in politics. In fact, it may have contributed to our political-industrial complex. Our current system guarantees a minimum level of funding for campaigns, particularly when both candidates in a race run "clean." This has effectively increased campaign costs rather than curbed them. When you add in the special interests spending on candidate's behalf, it is no wonder why our mailboxes are full every fall.

In response to these concerns, I propose limiting eligibility for clean elections to one campaign for the State House and one for the State Senate, resetting every 15 years. The goal is to position Clean Elections as a steppingstone for candidates introducing themselves to a district for the first time. As most of us know—and as some freshman legislators will soon discover—incumbency offers significant advantages. Incumbents can send newsletters to their districts at taxpayer expense, access thousands of dollars in constituent service funds, and benefit from other perks that give them an edge in elections.

By limiting clean elections in this way, we can significantly reduce the amount of public money spent on Maine politics while still ensuring that newcomers have a fair opportunity to compete. This approach promotes fiscal responsibility and levels the playing field for candidates without the built-in advantages of incumbency.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

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