



Maine Conservation Voters

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Testimony of Maine Conservation Voters “An Act to Require Disclosure of Campaign Funding Sources” Before the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and the distinguished members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee.

My name is Nick Janzen, Partnerships Director at Maine Conservation Voters, and I’m speaking in opposition to LD 951, “An Act to Require Disclosure of Campaign Funding Sources,” on behalf of more than 13,000 members and supporters of MCV, where we work to build an inclusive democracy and to make conservation and climate action a political priority.

We have grave concerns about this legislation—beyond the First Amendment infringements, this bill would impose spectacularly burdensome reporting and notification requirements and open our members to serious privacy and safety threats.

To be clear, MCV accepts the importance of campaign finance regulation. An informed electorate is the cornerstone of a healthy democracy, and transparency around election spending is an important part of that. But the problem is the total amount of money being spent in our elections, and this bill doesn’t actually limit those expenditures.

LD 951 is a refined but substantially similar bill to LD 1590 considered by the 131st Legislature. While LD 951 provides a bit more specificity, it appears that the covered committees are the same, the triggering thresholds are the same, the outreach to donors is similar if a bit clearer here, and both bills would prevent the use of money until confirmation is received and require segregation of donated funds. Given the similarities, all of our objections to last session’s LD 1590 apply here, too.

The reporting and notification process is cumbersome, and it’s not clear what benefit it serves. Our mission at MCV is to protect “Maine’s environment and our democracy by influencing public policy, holding politicians accountable, and winning elections.” Our members know this. They support us *because* we do this work. There’s no point in requiring an additional layer of

notification and permission to use donated funds for political ends when those ends are clearly stated as part of our broader mission.

More important than the burden this would impose on MCV as an organization and on our members, complying with this law could actually endanger our members. The Trump Administration is criminally investigating organizations that have received federal grants to work on climate change.¹ This isn't hyperbole—the FBI is telling banks to freeze organizations' funds while it investigates. They're going after dangerous, shadowy organizations like Habitat for Humanity and United Way. MCV will always comply with state and federal law, but it's a particularly bad time to force us to compile a list of people who would be seen as political targets by the current presidential administration.

This legislation would overly burden organizations like my own seeking to ethically and legally engage in our democratic elections. Maine Conservation Voters strongly urges you to vote “ought not to pass” on LD 951, and I'd be happy to answer your questions.

Thank you.

Nicholas Janzen, Esq.
Partnerships Director
Maine Conservation Voters

¹ Ja'han Jones, “Citibank says FBI recommended that it freeze the accounts of climate grant recipients,” MSNBC, Mar. 13, 2025.

<https://www.msnbc.com/top-stories/latest/citibank-freeze-accounts-climate-grants-epa-fbi-rcna196305>