



TO: The Honorable Craig Hickman
The Honorable Laura Supica, Co-Chairs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

DATE: April 7, 2025

RE: LD 1229: An Act to Create Equity in Maine's Campaign Finance Laws Between Enrolled and Unenrolled Candidates

Good morning Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,

My name is Al Cleveland, and I am the Advocacy Director of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections. I am testifying against LD 1229. Maine Citizens for Clean Elections has been the leading campaign finance organization in Maine for over twenty years and one of the nation's most respected state-based organizations advocating for democratically funded elections. We are proud of our national reputation. But we are all Mainers, and our nonpartisan mission has always been with and for the people of this state.

LD 1229 aims to create a level playing field for unenrolled candidates who do not compete in primary elections and therefore only have one election period to raise contributions. As you heard when we testified on LD 390, MCCE shares the goal of fairness for unenrolled candidates, but we support an alternative policy approach.

Rather than changing the contribution limit, we suggested in prior testimony that the unenrolled candidate should have two election periods, concurrent with the primary and general elections. An unenrolled candidate that gets an early start and wants to begin campaigning in the spring could raise funds and begin to build connections and name recognition with voters at the same time as party candidates are doing the same. During the general election period, the contribution limit would reset for each donor, and the same limit would apply to both party and unenrolled candidates.

Unenrolled candidates who use Clean Elections receive the same amount of funding during the primary election as the party candidates who have uncontested primary elections. We believe it makes sense to apply this same standard to privately-financed candidates.

In summary, aligning the contribution limits for unenrolled candidates with the primary and general election would be a fairer approach to all candidates. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions from the Committee.