



Mike Tipping
Senator, District 8

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

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

My name is Mike Tipping. I represent Senate District 8 in Penobscot County and I'm proud to present **LD1350, An Act to Ban Corporate Contributions to Candidates.**

Corporations aren't people, and people should decide our elections.

118 years ago, the United States passed its first federal campaign finance law, The Tillman Act, banning corporations from making contributions in federal elections. The Supreme Court has upheld this and other campaign finance limitations based on their understanding of the threat of "corruption or the appearance of corruption" that could have an affect on "candidates' positions and on their actions if elected to office."

Half of states in the country have followed the federal lead, also banning corporate contributions made directly to candidates.

Maine should do the same. Limiting the influence of corporate money in our politics and our government is essential to ensuring that the Maine Legislature continues to represent and work for the people of Maine, not wealthy corporations that seek to distort the function of government for their own benefit.

At a time when trust in government is at a historic low, this is a step we can take to restore some confidence in our elections, in our legislature and in democracy itself.

We've seen the influence of big corporate money in health care, environmental and tax policy and Mainers are less healthy, safe and free because of their spending.

You may be thinking, haven't I heard this before. You'd be right. In 2021, the legislature passed and the governor signed a similar ban on corporate contributions. That ban also included prohibitions on corporate contributions to PACs and other independent spending that prompted some confusion and court challenges. Last term, the entire law was repealed.

This bill wouldn't restore all of the former law, but it would take an important step in banning the most direct influence on candidates by prohibiting direct contributions by corporations to candidate campaigns.

There's a lot more we should do to address the pernicious influence of money in politics, but at least we should do this. Corporations shouldn't be handing money directly to current or aspiring elected officials to fund their campaigns for office.

Thank you for your consideration.