



**Testimony in Support of LD 1284: [“An Act To Amend the Maine Clean Election Act and Related Laws”](#)**

Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo, and the distinguished members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Nick Murray and I serve as policy analyst for Maine Policy Institute, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that advocates for individual liberty and economic freedom in Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 1284.

Despite failing to deliver on proponents' claims of greater electoral competitiveness and legislative diversity, every Maine taxpayer, despite their individual views, are forced to fund political messages from candidates under the Maine Clean Elections Act (MCEA).

Though the law has often been touted as a way to level the political playing field, a 2012 University of Maine review of 20 elections revealed that “electoral competitiveness in Maine has not been appreciably affected by MCEA.”<sup>1</sup>

This is likely due to the emergence of PACs and outside special interest groups which have allowed “clean” candidates to receive taxpayer funding while enjoying the support of deep-pocketed donors. Any rationale for taxpayer-funded candidates fails to take into account this basic law of politics: money finds a way.

Maine has spent close to \$40 million on taxpayer-funded political campaigns to date. More than \$6 million was spent in 2018 alone, a 90% increase from 2016, largely due to the disbursements to three gubernatorial primary campaigns.<sup>2</sup>

Legislators should be especially wary of these sorts of unknown spending lines, since the recently passed “Back-to-Basics” budget spends 99.4% of all projected revenue over the next two years.

LD 1284 would stem potential runaway spending of the MCEA, first and foremost by excluding gubernatorial candidates, who today may each qualify for up to \$3 million dollars of public funds, and by reducing disbursements of public money to legislative candidates.

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<sup>1</sup> Powell, Richard J. “[Cleaning House? Assessing the Impact of Maine's Clean Elections Act on Electoral Competitiveness](#)” Maine Policy Review 19.2 (2010)

<sup>2</sup> [MCEA Overview 2002 - 2018](#) | Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics and Elections Practices

It would also provide more direct accountability of publicly-financed politicians by requiring their seed money contributors to be their constituents.

Please deem LD 1284 “Ought To Pass” and deliver much-needed reforms to the MCEA. Thank you for your time and consideration.