



Testimony in Opposition to LD 1442: “[An Act Regarding Publicly Financed Legislative Candidates in Competitive Primaries](#)”

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 opposition to LD 1442.

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).

Maine has spent close to \$40 million on taxpayer-funded political campaigns to date. In 2018, over \$6 million, a 90% increase from 2016, largely due to the disbursements to three gubernatorial primary campaigns.¹

LD 1442 would only exacerbate these effects by ratcheting up disbursements of taxpayer funds to political candidates. It would raise distributions of Maine taxpayer dollars to participating legislative candidates in contested primary contests by more than 170%. Who knows how much this could add to state spending?

This bill could lead to runaway budget lines which would have to be dealt with via a governor's curtailment order or a supplemental appropriations bill, depending on when the costs are realized in the scope of the legislative session.

Legislators should be especially wary of open-ended budget items, having recently passed the “Back-to-Basics” budget which spends 99.4% of all projected revenue over the next two years.

Public money should not be used to pay for political consultants or mail pieces. Furthermore, a viable candidate should be able to attract voluntary contributions. Shouldn't those who finance political campaigns have some interest in doing so? What better method than are voluntary, individual contributions for providing transparency, and securing the right to choose one's level of engagement in the political system?

¹ [MCEA Overview 2002 - 2018](#) | Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics and Elections Practices

Please act to rein in runaway spending in Maine's state budget, not encourage it, and deem LD 1442 "Ought Not To Pass." Thank you for your time and consideration.