



STATE OF MAINE
 COMMISSION ON GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS
 AND ELECTION PRACTICES
 135 STATE HOUSE STATION
 AUGUSTA, MAINE
 04333-0135

LD 118 – An Act to Allow Candidates for Sheriff and District Attorney to Participate in the MCEA
Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs
February 3, 2025

Submitted by Martha Currier, Assistant Director
 Maine Ethics Commission

The Commission staff is neither for nor against LD 118 and submits this written testimony for informational purposes.

LD 118 proposes MCEA campaign financing for sheriff and district attorney candidates. The Commission can administer this program; however, there is a cost to fund these races and to upgrade our electronic campaign finance reporting systems.

It is impossible to know how many candidates would apply for MCEA funding. However, we estimate that the number could fall between 40-50%, which is a little less than the actual participation rate in legislative races. Countywide races are often uncontested, but whether that is a matter of interest or financing is unknown.

Section 13 of the bill directs the Commission to establish the terms of participation for sheriff and district attorney candidates. For the purposes of the fiscal note we will prepare for this bill, staff proposes the following based on historical campaign finance reporting data from 2018-2024.

Candidates for Sheriff

Since 2018, campaign reporting for sheriff races reflects an average of \$3,775 raised and \$3,700 spent. Commission staff do not recommend supplemental payments for sheriff races currently due to the historically low dollar spending.

Qualifying Contributions (QC)*	175
Seed Money**	\$1,500
Primary	\$500 uncontested / \$2,000 contested
General	\$1,000 uncontested / \$4,000 contested
Supplemental	n/a

* Qualifying Contributions must be obtained from the personal funds of voters within the district.

** Seed Money contributions are received from individuals not to exceed \$100 prior to qualification and help with initial campaign expenses.

Candidates for District Attorney

Since 2018, campaign reporting for district attorney races in the eight prosecutorial districts reflects an average of \$13,679 raised and \$13,707 spent but is skewed due to a very expensive

OFFICE LOCATED AT: 45 MEMORIAL CIRCLE, AUGUSTA, MAINE
 WEBSITE: WWW.MAINE.GOV/ETHICS

PHONE: (207) 287-4179

FAX: (207) 287-6775

2018 race in District 2 (Cumberland County) when more than \$150,000 was raised and spent across all candidates that cycle. 2022 had more typical campaign finance reporting with an average of \$11,771 raised and \$11,488 spent resulting in the recommendations below. The next district attorney races occur in 2026.

Qualifying Contributions (QC)*	200
Seed Money**	\$2,000
Primary	\$750 Uncontested, \$2,500 Contested
General	\$1,500 Uncontested, \$7,500 Contested
Supplemental***	50 QC = \$1,875 available up to 4 times

* Qualifying Contributions must be obtained from the personal funds of voters within the district.

** Seed Money contributions are received from individuals not to exceed \$100 prior to qualification and help with initial campaign expenses.

***Staff recommend the availability of 4 supplemental payments of \$1,875 each when a candidate provides 50 additional QC donations.

Thank you for considering this information.