

Congresswoman Chellie Pingree critical of Supreme Court decision on campaign finance

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Says decision shows that “the system is broken”

Congresswoman Chellie Pingree criticized a Supreme Court decision announced today that would allow corporations to spend unlimited amounts of money in Congressional and Presidential elections.

“This decision paves the way for big corporations to buy elections,” Pingree said. “Powerful special interests like banks and insurance companies already have too much influence in Washington, and this Supreme Court decision will only make it worse.”

“This means that big banks, credit card companies and the insurance industry can start pouring money into campaigns to elect their friends and defeat those who are fighting for reform,” Pingree said.

This week Pingree wrote a letter to Speaker Nancy Pelosi, signed by over 50 of her colleagues, calling for passage of a campaign finance reform bill Pingree introduced last year.

“This decision today shows how badly the system is broken,” Pingree said. “The ultimate solution to campaign finance reform is to provide public financing of campaigns. We’ve done it in Maine and it’s been very successful. It’s time to take the lessons we’ve learned here to the rest of the country and get big money out of campaigns.”

Pingree’s bill, The Fair Elections Now Act, is a voluntary system that would limit contributions to \$100, emphasize grassroots support and bring campaign finance reform into the 21st Century.

Maine has a “Clean Elections” system that allows candidates for the Legislature and Governor to raise small contributions as seed money and then receive public financing to pay for the remainder of their campaign expenses. Clean Elections candidates hold 85% of the seats in the Maine Legislature.

A bipartisan group of lawmakers introduced two versions of the bill last year—one for the Senate and one for the House. Both proposals require candidates to raise a minimum level of small individual contributions to qualify. Once they have qualified, they will have to abide by strict fundraising restrictions and disclosure requirements in return for public funding based on the average costs of winning campaigns in recent elections.