



Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

LD 394 – An Act Regarding Terminology in Campaign Finance Law

February 27, 2017

Senator Mason, Representative Luchini, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on LD 394 – An Act Regarding Terminology in Campaign Finance Law.

My name is Andrew Bossie. I am the Executive Director of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections.

Maine Citizens for Clean Elections has been the leading campaign finance organization in Maine for over twenty years, and one of the nation's most respected state-based organizations advocating for democratically funded elections. We are proud of our national reputation, but we are all Mainers, and our mission has always been with and for the people of this state.

LD 394 would change the name of the Maine Clean Election Act to the Maine Campaign Public Financing Act.

The Maine Clean Election Act was enacted 21 years ago by the people of Maine, after years of legislative inaction. Over the years, an entire generation of Mainers has grown up knowing about Clean Elections, and knowing that Maine was very special to have this new way of campaigning.

Everyday people know what the law is and what it does, and they are perfectly happy with the name that has now been in place for so long. In the more than two decades in which MCCE has been working on campaign finance issues, the only criticism we have ever heard of the word "clean" has come from a handful of legislators, candidates, and campaign activists who are ideologically opposed to public funding. Similarly, it is legislators themselves who speculate about the use of the word "dirty" to describe privately funded candidates. MCCE has never used this language, and neither has the State of Maine. We don't hear it much from citizens, either.

The sponsors of LD 394 have harshly criticized public funding. They tried and failed to defeat the 2015 citizen initiative, and now they want you to change the name of the law. That train left the station a long time ago. The words "Clean Elections" now belong to the public – to voters and candidates alike. Public funding in Maine will forever be known as "Clean Elections." This bill is an affront to voters who chose the name, built the system, and contribute to its success in each and every election cycle

This bill would solve nothing, and would not reflect well on the legislature, with so much other serious business before you. The only possible result of passing it would be to create confusion. It is a waste of your time and should be swiftly defeated.

For all these reasons we urge you to vote ought not to pass on LD 394.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions or provide additional information for the work session.