



Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

LD 459 – Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 3: Maine Clean Election Act and Related Provisions, a Major Substantive Rule of the Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices

March 1, 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 459 – Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 3: Maine Clean Election Act and Related Provisions, a Major Substantive Rule of the Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices

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.

We testify in favor of LD 459, and we hope for a unanimous ought-to-pass vote from the Committee. Most of the items in these rules are of a housekeeping nature, allowing the Commission to adjust their work to reflect changing practices in campaigns. Some of the rules are needed to comply with new statutory law enacted in recent years, including the 2015 citizen initiative. The rules ensure transparency, stability, and accountability in the use of Clean Election funds. The subject matter addressed by the rules includes preventing fraudulent qualifying contributions, making financial projections of the use of the Clean Election Fund, prohibiting large cash expenditures by Clean Election candidates, and improving the process for collecting qualifying contributions. We have reviewed the rules and agree that they are thoughtful, reasonable, and consistent with the governing provisions of Title 21-A and the principles of the Clean Election Act.

The non-partisan staff and member of the Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices drafted these rules after considering written and verbal public comments, as well as the Commission staff’s long experience with all manner of campaign-related issues. A very small number of issues or questions were raised by the public during the Commission’s rulemaking process, and we believe the Commission did an admirable job of addressing and answering those queries. We greatly appreciate the excellent work of the Commission.

MCCE supports these rules and urges adoption of this Resolve.

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