

**The Maine Heritage Policy Center
Testimony to Support LD 202
“An Act To Increase the Required Number of Qualifying
Contributions Gubernatorial Candidates Must Obtain To
Qualify as Maine Clean Election Act Candidates.”**

Senator Luchini, Representative Schneck, and distinguished members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Adam Crepeau and I serve as the policy analyst for The Maine Heritage Policy Center. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 202, “An Act To Increase the Required Number of Qualifying Contributions Gubernatorial Candidates Must Obtain To Qualify as Maine Clean Election Act Candidates.”

According to the Maine Ethics Commission website, \$1.125 million was distributed to gubernatorial candidates from the Maine Clean Elections Fund during the general election. During the primary election (before June 12, 2018), approximately \$1.6 million was distributed to gubernatorial candidates. In total, just over \$2.7 million was dispersed to Maine Clean Election Act candidates.¹ All or portions of that \$2.7 million could have been put to better use than financing lawn signs that clutter our roadways and robocalls that are more of an inconvenience than an informational tool. For example, some of those funds could have been appropriated to the Department of Health and Human Services to help more uninsured individuals receive access to Opioid Health Home services to further combat the opioid problem in our state.

LD 202 would help to ensure taxpayers are not subsidizing gubernatorial candidates that cannot meet a qualifying contribution threshold that shows they have significant support. By almost doubling the number of qualifying contributions necessary to have access to Maine Clean Election Act funding, it sets the bar higher for candidates. In addition, every gubernatorial candidate who has qualified for Maine Clean Election funding since it has been enacted has failed to take the Blaine House. While this change would be a high bar, an elevated signature minimum may lead us to see more competitive candidates in the future.

These small but significant reforms that may help to reduce spending in state government are certainly sobering to see. This is just one of many reforms The Maine Heritage Policy Center would like to see made to the Maine Clean Election Act. We hope that when the time comes, the committee will consider supporting other significant reforms to the Maine Clean Election Act.

I urge the committee to vote “Ought to Pass” on this bill. Thank you.

¹ <https://mainecampaignfinance.com/index.html#/transactionSearch/53>