



TO: The Honorable Craig Hickman  
The Honorable Laura Supica, Co-Chairs  
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

DATE: February 6, 2023

RE: LD 255 - An Act to Require Campaign Finance Reports for State and County Candidates  
Other than Governor to Be Filed on the 42nd Day Before Any Election

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Good morning Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee.

My name is Paul Lavin. I'm a resident of Winthrop. I am here today as a volunteer on behalf of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections to testify in favor of L.D. 255.

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 and campaign finance laws that serve the public interest. We are proud of our national reputation. But we are all Mainers, and our nonpartisan mission has always been with and for the people of this state.

I was aware the bill's sponsor may suggest an amendment and my testimony is based on that amendment which would exempt clean election candidates from the requirement to file a 42-day pre-primary report.

MCCE supports L.D. 255 for two reasons. First, the public will have important information about fundraising and spending by traditionally financed candidates in a more timely fashion. Second, the bill makes the reporting schedules of traditionally and publicly financed legislative candidates roughly aligned with each other.

Most traditionally financed candidates file their first campaign finance report eleven (11) days before the primary.<sup>1</sup> A significant amount of fundraising and spending takes place from the time a candidate registers and the deadline for the candidate's first report. As the following table illustrates, candidates raise hundreds of thousands of dollars in the months leading up to the primary. But the public is unaware of all that financial activity until just 11 days before the primary.

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<sup>1</sup> Legislative and county candidates who have raised or spent more than \$500 in the calendar year prior to the election are required to file one or two semiannual reports covering financial activity during that year.

<b>Contributions Reported by Traditionally Financed Legislative and County Candidates<sup>2</sup></b>			
Election Year	Current schedule - a single pre-primary report	Proposed 42-day pre-primary report period	Proposed 11-day pre-primary report period
2016	\$467,013	\$236,937	\$230,046
2018	\$459,375	\$235,328	\$224,047
2022	\$570,874	\$343,750	\$227,124

This bill would also bring Maine into alignment with the majority of states that currently require candidates to file two or more campaign finance reports before a primary.

Adding this report would not be overly burdensome for candidates. This bill does not change or increase what has to be reported. Candidates already have to report the information that would be contained in the proposed 42-day pre-primary report. This bill simply changes the timing of when some of that information has to be disclosed to the public.

In addition to improved disclosure, this bill would put traditionally and publicly financed legislative candidates on a similar filing schedule for pre-primary reports. Clean election candidates must file a seed money report by April 20th, disclosing all their financial activity up to that date. A 42-day pre-primary report will usually be due at the end of April or beginning of May and will cover roughly the same period as the seed money report. This bill would put all legislative candidates on equal footing in disclosing to the public their campaign activity before the primary.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I urge you to vote ought to pass on LD 255. I would be happy to answer any questions from the Committee.

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<sup>2</sup> The table does not include the financial activity for 2020 because the date of the primary was changed and the reporting period is not comparable to the other election years. The source of the data is the Maine Ethics Commission ([www.mainecampaignfinance.com](http://www.mainecampaignfinance.com)).