



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE

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TO: Senator Nancy B. Sullivan, Senate Chair
Representative Pamela Jabar Trinward, House Chair
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Legal and Veterans Affairs

DATE: February 4, 2009

RE: LD 205 An Act to Repeal the Maine Clean Election Act (Rep. Cebra, Sponsor)

Good afternoon, I'm Ann Luther, the co-president of the League of Women Voters of Maine. The League of Women Voters urges you today to vigorously OPPOSE repeal of the Maine Clean Election Act.

The League of Women Voters believes that methods of financing political campaigns should work to ensure the public's right to know; combat corruption and undue influence; enable candidates to compete equitably for public office; and allow maximum citizen access to the political process. The League believes that public financing of elections is the best approach for accomplishing these goals.

The League of Women Voters has been a leader in seeking campaign finance reform at the state and federal levels for more than three decades. The League is proud to have been a founding member of the broad-based, nonpartisan coalition that drafted the law and collected 65,000 signatures in 1995 to put the question before the voters.

The Maine Clean Election Act was a landmark reform – citizen initiated -- that appeared on the ballot in 1996, a Presidential election year when Maine ranked #1 nationwide in voter turnout. This measure passed with 56% of the vote. More Maine voters (320,755) said “yes” to this ballot question than have voted for any winning gubernatorial candidate in the last 15 years. We believe that failure to retain Maine's public financing system would be a breach of public trust and an enormous loss to the public good.

Maine's public financing system is an exemplar of good government practice to be emulated in other states around the country and at the federal level. The annualized cost of public financing in Maine is truly modest in light of the fundamental public benefit it provides.

The League urges you to OPPOSE LD 205.

Ann Luther, Co-president
League of Women Voters of Maine

The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

Founded in 1920, the League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major political policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.