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An Act To Alter the Distribution of Maine Clean Election Act Funding to Gubernatorial Candidates

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 21-A MRSA §1125, sub-§3, ¶A, as amended by PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. F, §1 and c. 443, Pt. B, §6, is further amended to read:

A. For a gubernatorial candidate, at least ~~3,250~~750 verified registered voters of this State must support the candidacy by providing a qualifying contribution to that candidate;

Sec. 2. 21-A MRSA §1125, sub-§6, as amended by PL 2007, c. 443, Pt. B, §6, is further amended to read:

6. Restrictions on contributions and expenditures for certified candidates. After certification, a candidate must limit the candidate's campaign expenditures and obligations, including outstanding obligations, to the revenues distributed to the candidate from the fund and, except as provided in subsection 6-C, may not accept any contributions unless specifically authorized by the commission. Candidates may also accept and spend interest earned on fund revenues in campaign bank accounts. All revenues distributed to a certified candidate from the fund must be used for campaign-related purposes. The candidate, the treasurer, the candidate's committee authorized pursuant to section 1013-A, subsection 1 or any agent of the candidate and committee may not use these revenues for any but campaign-related purposes. The commission shall publish guidelines outlining permissible campaign-related expenditures.

Sec. 3. 21-A MRSA §1125, sub-§6-C is enacted to read:

6-C. Additional contributions authorized; gubernatorial candidates. After certification pursuant to subsection 5, a gubernatorial candidate may continue to collect contributions in the amount of \$5 from verified registered voters in this State. A voter who provides a qualifying contribution during the qualifying period to a candidate in a contested primary may provide an additional \$5 contribution to that candidate after certification pursuant to this subsection.

Sec. 4. 21-A MRSA §1125, sub-§8, ¶E, as enacted by PL 2003, c. 453, §1, is amended to read:

E. For gubernatorial primary elections, the amount of revenues distributed is ~~\$200,000~~an amount equal to \$55 for each qualifying contribution collected pursuant to subsection 3, paragraph A, up to a maximum of \$350,000 per candidate in the primary election.

Sec. 5. 21-A MRSA §1125, sub-§8, ¶F, as amended by PL 2007, c. 443, Pt. B, §6, is further amended to read:

F. For gubernatorial general elections, the amount of revenues distributed is ~~\$600,000~~an amount equal to \$55 for each qualifying contribution collected pursuant to subsection 3, paragraph A if that amount was not distributed pursuant to paragraph E, plus an amount equal to \$55 for each additional \$5 contribution collected pursuant to subsection 6-C, up to a maximum of \$750,000 per candidate in the general election.

SUMMARY

This bill does the following.

1. It reduces from 3,250 to 750 the number of qualifying contributions required for a gubernatorial candidate to be certified as a Maine Clean Election Act candidate.
2. It provides that a Maine Clean Election Act gubernatorial candidate may continue to collect \$5 contributions from registered voters in the State.
3. It allows a voter who provides a \$5 qualifying contribution to a gubernatorial candidate in a contested primary to provide an additional \$5 contribution to that candidate after certification.
4. It provides that each \$5 qualifying contribution and each \$5 additional contribution must be matched by a distribution of \$55 from the Maine Clean Election Fund.
5. It increases the distribution limits for gubernatorial primary elections from \$200,000 to \$350,000 and for gubernatorial general elections from \$600,000 to \$750,000.