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An Act To Clarify the Rights of Public Employee Unions and Public Employers To Agree through Collective Bargaining To Permit Payroll Deductions for Union Dues or Other Funds

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

Sec. 1. 21-A MRSA §32, sub-§3, as enacted by PL 2003, c. 176, §3, is amended to read:

3. Class C crime. A person commits a Class C crime if that person misuses a state government computer system. For purposes of this subsection, a person is guilty of misuse of a state government computer system if that person knowingly uses a computer system operated by a state department or agency, the Judicial Department or the Legislature:

A. To prepare materials with the intent to expressly advocate, to those eligible to vote, for the election or defeat of any candidate for a federal office, a constitutional office or elective municipal, county or state office, including leadership positions in the State Senate and the State House of Representatives; or

B. With the intent to solicit contributions reportable under chapter 13.

For purposes of this subsection, "computer system" has the same meaning as in Title 17-A, section 431 and "leadership positions" means the presiding officers of each House of the Legislature, party leaders, the Clerk of the House, the Assistant Clerk of the House, the Secretary of the Senate and the Assistant Secretary of the Senate.

This subsection may not be construed to prohibit a public employer from deducting dues or other funds from an employee's pay, as authorized by the employee and provided through a collective bargaining agreement, and remitting those funds to an account or fund owned by the employee's collective bargaining agent, even if the funds might be used for political or legislative purposes.

SUMMARY

The bill clarifies that the statutory prohibition on using a state computer to solicit political contributions does not bar a public employer from deducting union dues and other funds that are authorized by the employee and remitting that deduction to the union, even if the amount deducted might be used by the union for political or legislative purposes.