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An Act To Increase the Amount and Number of Qualifying Contributions under the Maine Clean Election Act

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

Sec. 1. 21-A MRSA §1122, sub-§7, ¶A, as amended by PL 2007, c. 443, Pt. B, §2, is further amended to read:

A. Of ~~\$5~~\$10 in the form of a check or a money order payable to the fund, signed by the contributor and made in support of a candidate;

Sec. 2. 21-A MRSA §1125, sub-§3, as amended by PL 2007, c. 571, §11, is further amended to read:

3. Qualifying contributions. Participating candidates must obtain qualifying contributions during the qualifying period as follows:

A. For a gubernatorial candidate, at least ~~3,250~~5,000 verified registered voters of this State must support the candidacy by providing a qualifying contribution to that candidate;

B. For a candidate for the State Senate, at least 150 verified registered voters from the candidate's electoral division must support the candidacy by providing a qualifying contribution to that candidate; or

C. For a candidate for the State House of Representatives, at least ~~50~~75 verified registered voters from the candidate's electoral division must support the candidacy by providing a qualifying contribution to that candidate.

A payment, gift or anything of value may not be given in exchange for a qualifying contribution. A candidate may pay the fee for a money order that is a qualifying contribution in the amount of ~~\$5~~\$10 as long as the donor making the qualifying contribution pays the ~~\$5~~\$10 amount reflected on the money order. Any money order fees paid by a participating candidate must be paid for with seed money and reported in accordance with commission rules. A money order must be signed by the contributor to be a valid qualifying contribution. The commission may establish by routine technical rule, adopted in accordance with Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A, a procedure for a qualifying contribution to be made by a credit or debit transaction and by electronic funds transfer over the Internet. Records containing information provided by individuals who have made qualifying contributions over the Internet are confidential, except for the name of the individual making the contribution, the date of the contribution, the individual's residential address and the name and office sought of the candidate in whose support the contribution was made.

It is a violation of this chapter for a participating candidate or an agent of the participating candidate to misrepresent the purpose of soliciting qualifying contributions and obtaining the contributor's signed acknowledgement.

SUMMARY

This bill increases the amount of a qualifying contribution under the Maine Clean Election Act from \$5 to \$10, increases the number of qualifying contributions a gubernatorial candidate must collect from 3,250 to 5,000 and increases the number of qualifying contributions a candidate for the State House of Representatives must collect from 50 to 75. The number of qualifying contributions a candidate for State Senate must collect remains at 150.