

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Reduce the Cost of 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. ~~From~~ \$5 to \$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 verified registered voters of this State must support the candidacy by providing a qualifying contribution to that candidate and at least \$32,500 in qualifying contributions;

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 and at least \$1,500 in qualifying contributions; or

C. For a candidate for the State House of Representatives, at least 50 verified registered voters from the candidate's electoral division must support the candidacy by providing a qualifying contribution to that candidate and at least \$500 in qualifying contributions.

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 ~~from~~ \$5 to \$10 as long as the donor making the qualifying contribution pays the \$5 to \$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.

Sec. 3. 21-A MRSA §1125, sub-§7-A, as amended by PL 2007, c. 443, Pt. B, §6, is further amended to read:

7-A. Deposit into account. The candidate or committee authorized pursuant to section 1013-A, subsection 1 shall deposit all revenues from the fund, additional funds raised under subsection 9-A and all seed money contributions in a campaign account with a bank or other financial institution. The campaign funds must be segregated from, and may not be commingled with, any other funds.

Sec. 4. 21-A MRSA §1125, sub-§8, ¶C, as amended by PL 2003, c. 688, Pt. A, §21, is further amended to read:

C. For contested legislative general elections, the amount of revenues distributed is the average amount of campaign expenditures made by each candidate during all contested general election races for the immediately preceding 2 general elections, as reported in the initial filing period subsequent to the general election, less \$2,750 for the respective offices of State Senate and less \$1,500 for the office of State House of Representatives.

Sec. 5. 21-A MRSA §1125, sub-§9-A is enacted to read:

9-A. Additional fund-raising. A participating candidate may raise additional funds from September 1st to October 15th of the election year. A donation raised under this subsection may be no more than \$50 and the total amount raised under this subsection may be no more than \$2,000 for a candidate for the State Senate or \$1,000 for a candidate for the State House of Representatives. A donation under this subsection may only be made by a registered voter within the electoral division for the office a candidate is seeking and whose voter registration has been verified by the municipal registrar. Funds raised under this subsection must be deposited into the campaign account under subsection 7-A and reported to the commission pursuant to subsection 12. Funds raised under this subsection must be used to offset matching funds under subsection 9 with the remainder to be remitted to the commission.

SUMMARY

This bill amends the Maine Clean Election Act by:

1. Changing the amount allowed for a qualifying contribution from \$5 to from \$5 to \$10;
2. Requiring a minimum amount of qualifying contributions of \$32,500 for a candidate for Governor, \$1,500 for a candidate for State Senate and \$500 for a candidate for State House of Representatives; and
3. Allowing a participating candidate to raise between September 1st and October 15th of the election year \$2,000 for a candidate for State Senate and \$1,000 for a candidate for State House of Representatives in amounts up to \$50 per donor who are registered voters of the candidate's district.