



*Testimony in opposition to SB 974*

April 4, 2019

To members of the Senate State Affairs Committee:

Sen. Joan Huffman (Chair)  
Sen. Bryan Hughes (Vice-Chair)  
Sen. Brian Birdwell  
Sen. Brandon Creighton  
Sen. Pat Fallon

Sen. Bob Hall  
Sen. Eddie Lucio, Jr  
Sen. Jane Nelson  
Sen. Judith Zaffirini

There is a common perception throughout the country that in politics, only people with money matter. To counter this perception, many states and municipalities have implemented “clean elections” programs. In 1996 Mainers passed the Maine Clean Election Act. Its purpose is to sever the connection between private money and public office. It enables candidates to run for office who do not possess, or have access to, large amounts money, thus making a run for office accessible to the broadest array of Maine citizens. John McCain supported Arizona’s adoption of their Clean Elections Act:

Cleans Elections restored voter confidence in the electoral process. It works well to overcome the influence of special interests. It gives Arizonans the power to create good government.

Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Mexico, North Carolina, Vermont, and West Virginia followed suit shortly thereafter. Many municipalities have enacted small donor public financing programs including Albuquerque (2005). New York City has had a successful small donor public financing program for decades.

Local candidates who are supported under these public financing programs tend to be younger, less affluent, more diverse, more gender balanced, and more geographically diverse than in previous elections.

According to the Brennan Center for Justice: “Small donor public financing is the most powerful, proven solution available to counter the overwhelming influence of wealth on our political process...”

A vote for this bill would be a vote to perpetuate the overwhelming influence of wealth on our political process.

Sincerely,

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