



For Immediate Release

June 24, 2013

Contact:

Andrew Bossie
MCCE Executive Director
207-831-6223

New Report Examines Campaign Contributions From Tax Reform Foes

Intense lobbying by affected industries is backed up by heavy political giving.

Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) released a report today examining the political donations made by nine industry sectors that lined up in opposition to LD 1496, An Act to Modernize and Simplify the Tax Code. The report shows that these industries made over \$6 million in contributions to influence legislative and gubernatorial elections since 2000 in Maine.

“Nearly every prominent lobbyist in the State House was employed to undermine this bill,” said Andrew Bossie, Executive Director of MCCE. “This report shows that they and their clients have elevated their voices through significant campaign giving.”

The comprehensive tax reform package is sponsored by Senator Dick Woodbury, an independent lawmaker from Yarmouth. The proposal seeks to lower the Maine income tax and broaden the sales tax base in order to stabilize Maine’s revenue system and increase revenue from tourists and out-of-state interests. Twenty-five separate entities registered to lobby on the bill, and thirty-six people testified in opposition at the public hearing. Each called attention to the bill’s impact on their industry, mainly from increased sales taxes or the elimination of tax exemptions.

Joining Senator Woodbury in support of the bill were three members of the public, three municipal officials, the Maine Municipal Association, and a handful of legislators, none of which were significant state electoral donors.

“Tax reform is a perennial challenge in Maine,” continued Bossie. “And the commercial interests mobilized against this bill are perennial donors to political campaigns.” According to data from the state’s Ethics Commission, these sectors contributed \$6,008,509 to state candidates and candidate-oriented PACs over the last 13 years. The total does not include money spent in referendum campaigns.

MCCE does not support or oppose LD 1496. “Maine legislators must weigh the benefits of restructuring the tax code against the impacts raised by industry during the legislative process,” said Bossie. “They must consider the effect not only on particular interests, but also on their constituents and the state as a whole. And, as always, Maine people deserve to know what role money in politics plays in their deliberations.”

The full report can be found at www.maineclipselections.org/money-9

###