# Report Details Spending by Outside Groups in Maine Elections

*Voters largely left in the dark about true sources of funds.*

Augusta, ME – Money from outside groups seeking to sway legislative elections in Maine has increased 563% from 2008 to 2012 according to a new report released today by Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE). "The Shell Game: How Independent Expenditures Have Invaded Maine Since *Citizens United*" is the 11th in a series of reports published by MCCE's Money and Politics Project.

"Recent court rulings that have weakened our Clean Elections and campaign finance laws are allowing unaccountable outside groups to unleash a flood of money to sway our elections and government," said BJ McCollister, Program Director for MCCE. "Voters are being left in the dark. A lack of strong disclosure laws make it possible for wealthy special interests to hide their identity when they spend to influence our elections."

The report shows that some nonprofit organizations, namely those classified under the 501(c) laws, are able to shield the identity of corporate or individual donors behind independent expenditures in Maine legislative and gubernatorial races. Entities are making as many as four to five transfers before making expenditures in Maine legislative races. The campaign finance shell game makes tracking the money a never ending, and at times, impossible process. With increased cover for contributors and the ability to make unlimited independent expenditures, groups are spending up to eleven times the amount of the average campaign budget in highly contested races.

"Voters are hearing more from outside groups than from the candidates themselves," said McCollister. "It is nearly impossible for voters to find out who is ultimately paying for the political ads in our elections. These large, untraceable expenditures pose a serious risk to our democracy."

Find the full report at mainecleanelections.org/money-11

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