



GRANT SAMPLE #2

What are the concrete objectives of your money in politics project and work over the next year and how are they related to your long-term goals?

When the Supreme Court overturned triggered matching funds in Arizona's Clean Election system in 2011, Maine lost the critical part of our program that allowed Clean Election candidates to remain competitive when outspent by privately funded opponents or independent expenditures. The Court's separate decision in Citizens United exacerbated the problem in Maine as it did across the country by dramatically increasing the flow of special interest money. After bipartisan participation that surpassed 75 percent during the 2000s, more Maine legislative candidates in 2014 are turning away from the state's public campaign financing program — in part because they fear being swept to defeat by a deluge of outside spending that publicly funded candidates can't match. This year, just 52 percent of candidates are running "clean." The largest decline came from GOP candidates in the House, of whom just 32 out of 149, or about 21 percent, are publicly financed. That's down from 41 percent in 2012. Without a strong funding, the system could end.

Recent legislative actions suggest that a strengthened Clean Elections law that fully restores and protects Maine's public financing law will only succeed when Maine people initiate the effort themselves. A citizen initiative offers Maine people the best chance to refresh their mandate on Clean Elections and fight back against the rapid influx of money in our political system. The Clean Elections Initiative provides a unique opportunity to mobilize Maine people on an issue important to every American. We aim to restore Maine's landmark Clean Election system for the next generation of Maine candidates with bold reforms that strengthen the hand of citizens in our democracy.

The Clean Elections Initiative aligns with XXX's long term goal of building a more democratic system of campaign financing on local, state, and national levels by providing a strategic and valuable win for the national movement, tying directly into the 2021 Victory Plan to reduce the influence of money in politics. XXX believes state victories are critical to address cynicism and build momentum towards success at the federal level. XXX works with a growing coalition to demonstrate how money in politics and the influence of wealthy donors and special interests undermines virtually every issue important to ordinary Americans. If, for example, we want to pass laws for clean water, affordable health care, and access to a quality education, we must create an election system that prioritizes everyday people and lessens dependence on special interest money. This reform will help remove obstacles that block sensible solutions for the pressing issues facing everyday people.

Our first-in-the-nation law is the first, and at one time, the most successful statewide public financing program in has served as a model for the country; it is vitally important we protect and secure Maine's law to advance the movement. This initiative will demonstrate that meaningful, people-centered reforms continue to generate broad support despite the cynical mood about politics generally. A victory in Maine, led by Maine people, will strengthen Maine's pioneering law while encouraging campaign finance reform efforts on the state and national level that seek to engage, educate, and mobilize people to build a powerful money in politics movement nationally.