

*131<sup>st</sup> Legislature*  
*Senate of*  
*Maine*  
*Senate District 2*

*Senator Harold 'Trey' Stewart*  
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**LD 1869, “An Act to Prohibit the Private Funding of Elections”**

**Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs**  
**May 10, 2023**

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs:

I am Senator Trey Stewart; and I represent District 2, which includes several communities in Aroostook County and Northern Penobscot County. I am here today to present to you LD 1869, “*An Act to Prohibit the Private Funding of Elections.*”

I am bringing this bill before the Committee today as a response to past improprieties in Maine elections as well as to avoid future inequalities. Maine’s system for financing and regulating elections is unique. We offer a robust system of public financing for our candidates while also closely regulating spending on independent expenditures by political action committees. Our system also requires regular and public disclosures of expenditures on electioneering.

While I am not looking to give a political science lecture this morning – or any morning, for that matter – I am concerned about an influx of money that seems to have impacted Maine elections in 2020. This money emanates largely from the principal owner of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, which is why we’ve termed this program Zuckerbucks.

Here’s how the scam works: Zuckerberg’s team looks at places where his preferred candidate(s) may be underperforming in voter turnout or absentee balloting and they provide additional resources to those cities and towns to promote get-out-the-vote (GOTV) efforts. I am attaching Maine data so you can see how this program manifested itself here, but this was a nationwide effort to turn out additional voters in major cities.

GOTV efforts, as we politicians refer to them during the silly season, are nothing new. I believe more people participating in elections is good - that’s what we should strive for; however, I do not believe the Zuckerbucks approach should be legal for a couple reasons:

1. This is a loophole for billionaires to get around campaign finance laws. In 2020 it was Mark Zuckerberg, but in 2024 it may just as well be the Koch brothers with a similar scheme. We have a system through which campaign finance dollars are to be reported and we have a

system by which towns are to run their elections. There should be no crossover and there should be no blind spot between the two.

2. Purchasing new equipment and paying poll workers creates a direct financial relationship between the entity (in this case Zuckerberg's Center for Tech and Civic Life) and the individual towns and town clerks. My district epitomizes local control. In some places, one clerk works two-three days per week at three different towns just to provide baseline services at an affordable rate because that is just how we want things to work in The County. In Representative Supica's hometown of Bangor they have a different model with several full-time city staff working on elections as well as in-person early voting open for several days in advance of the election. I am fine with both models, just so long as neither is paid for by billionaires with an agenda – or any type of private, undisclosed money, for that matter.

Thank you for your time this morning and for your thoughtful consideration of this important matter. I will do my best to respond to any questions you may have.

State	Municipality	Grant Amount Spent
Maine	Portland	\$284,584
Maine	Lewiston	\$272,519
Maine	Bangor	\$272,104
Maine	Auburn	\$259,076
Maine	South Portland	\$205,938
Maine	Sandford	\$159,540
Maine	Orono	\$159,025
Maine	Cumberland	\$155,000
Maine	Augusta	\$145,237
Maine	Bath	\$144,315
Maine	Brunswick	\$137,760
Maine	Waterville	\$80,000
Maine	Farmington	\$75,469
Maine	Dover-Foxcroft	\$55,000
Maine	Kennebunk	\$55,000
Maine	Kittery	\$55,000
Maine	Presque Isle	\$38,250
Maine	Biddeford	\$38,083
Maine	Millinocket	\$32,678
Maine	Scarborough	\$18,174
Maine	Alna	\$10,000
Maine	Westbrook	\$8,136
Maine	Fort Kent	\$7,450
Maine	Saco	\$7,440
Maine	Windham	\$5,564

Maine	Portland	\$284,584
Maine	Bangor	\$272,104
		\$556,688

Maine	Gorham	\$5,302
Maine	Albion	\$5,000
Maine	Alfred	\$5,000
Maine	Alton	\$5,000
Maine	Amherst	\$5,000
Maine	Anson	\$5,000
Maine	Ashland	\$5,000
Maine	Belfast	\$5,000
Maine	Belgrade	\$5,000
Maine	Benton	\$5,000
Maine	Berwick	\$5,000
Maine	Bingham	\$5,000
Maine	Blue Hill	\$5,000
Maine	Boothbay	\$5,000
Maine	Boothbay Harbor	\$5,000
Maine	Bowdoinham	\$5,000
Maine	Bradford	\$5,000
Maine	Bradley	\$5,000
Maine	Brewer	\$5,000
Maine	Bristol	\$5,000
Maine	Brooksville	\$5,000
Maine	Brownfield	\$5,000
Maine	Brownville	\$5,000
Maine	Buckfield	\$5,000
Maine	Bucksport	\$5,000
Maine	Burlington	\$5,000
Maine	Buxton	\$5,000

Maine	Canaan	\$5,000
Maine	Caribou	\$5,000
Maine	Carmel	\$5,000
Maine	Casco	\$5,000
Maine	Castine	\$5,000
Maine	Charleston	\$5,000
Maine	Chelsea	\$5,000
Maine	Chesterville	\$5,000
Maine	China	\$5,000
Maine	Clifton	\$5,000
Maine	Columbia Falls	\$5,000
Maine	Cornish	\$5,000
Maine	Crystal	\$5,000
Maine	Cushing	\$5,000
Maine	Dayton	\$5,000
Maine	Dedham	\$5,000
Maine	Deer Isle	\$5,000
Maine	Denmark	\$5,000
Maine	Dennysville	\$5,000
Maine	Dexter	\$5,000
Maine	Dresden	\$5,000
Maine	Dixfield	\$5,000
Maine	Durham	\$5,000
Maine	East Millinocket	\$5,000
Maine	Eddington	\$5,000
Maine	Eliot	\$5,000
Maine	Ellsworth	\$5,000

Maine	Enfield	\$5,000
Maine	Eustis	\$5,000
Maine	Fairfield	\$5,000
Maine	Farmingdale	\$5,000
Maine	Fayette	\$5,000
Maine	Fort Fairfield	\$5,000
Maine	Freeport	\$5,000
Maine	Frenchville	\$5,000
Maine	Fryeburg	\$5,000
Maine	Georgetown	\$5,000
Maine	Gray	\$5,000
Maine	Guildford	\$5,000
Maine	Hallowell	\$5,000
Maine	Hampden	\$5,000
Maine	Harpwell	\$5,000
Maine	Harrison	\$5,000
Maine	Hermon	\$5,000
Maine	Hiram	\$5,000
Maine	Hollis	\$5,000
Maine	Hope	\$5,000
Maine	Houlton	\$5,000
Maine	Howland	\$5,000
Maine	Industry	\$5,000
Maine	Island Falls	\$5,000
Maine	Isleboro	\$5,000
Maine	Jay	\$5,000
Maine	Kenduskeag	\$5,000

Maine	Kennebunkport	\$5,000
Maine	Lamoine	\$5,000
Maine	Lebanon	\$5,000
Maine	Leeds	\$5,000
Maine	Levant	\$5,000
Maine	Limington	\$5,000
Maine	Lincoln	\$5,000
Maine	Litchfield	\$5,000
Maine	Lisbon	\$5,000
Maine	Livermore	\$5,000
Maine	Livermore Falls	\$5,000
Maine	Long Island	\$5,000
Maine	Lowell	\$5,000
Maine	Lyman	\$5,000
Maine	Madawaska	\$5,000
Maine	Madison	\$5,000
Maine	Medway	\$5,000
Maine	Mercer	\$5,000
Maine	Minot	\$5,000
Maine	Monmouth	\$5,000
Maine	Montville	\$5,000
Maine	Mount Desert	\$5,000
Maine	New Gloucester	\$5,000
Maine	New Sharon	\$5,000
Maine	New Sweden	\$5,000
Maine	Newcastle	\$5,000
Maine	Nobleboro	\$5,000

Maine	Norridgewock	\$5,000
Maine	North Berwick	\$5,000
Maine	North Yarmouth	\$5,000
Maine	Norway	\$5,000
Maine	Old Orchard Beach	\$5,000
Maine	Orrington	\$5,000
Maine	Owls Head	\$5,000
Maine	Oxford	\$5,000
Maine	Paris	\$5,000
Maine	Pittsfield	\$5,000
Maine	Pittston	\$5,000
Maine	Poland	\$5,000
Maine	Porter	\$5,000
Maine	Prospect	\$5,000
Maine	Rangeley	\$5,000
Maine	Raymond	\$5,000
Maine	Readfield	\$5,000
Maine	Rockland	\$5,000
Maine	Rome	\$5,000
Maine	Sabattus	\$5,000
Maine	Sedgwick	\$5,000
Maine	Shapleigh	\$5,000
Maine	Sherman	\$5,000
Maine	Sidney - Town	\$5,000
Maine	Skowhegan	\$5,000
Maine	Smithfield	\$5,000
Maine	Solon	\$5,000



Maine	Somerville	\$5,000
Maine	South Thomaston	\$5,000
Maine	Southport	\$5,000
Maine	Stacyville	\$5,000
Maine	Standish	\$5,000
Maine	Starks	\$5,000
Maine	Steuben	\$5,000
Maine	Stockholm	\$5,000
Maine	Stockton Springs	\$5,000
Maine	Stonington	\$5,000
Maine	Sumner	\$5,000
Maine	Thomaston	\$5,000
Maine	Topsham	\$5,000
Maine	Turner	\$5,000
Maine	Union	\$5,000
Maine	Van Buren	\$5,000
Maine	Vassalboro	\$5,000
Maine	Veazie	\$5,000
Maine	Wade	\$5,000
Maine	Waldoboro	\$5,000
Maine	Wales	\$5,000
Maine	Warren	\$5,000
Maine	Washburn	\$5,000
Maine	Washington	\$5,000
Maine	Wesley	\$5,000
Maine	West Paris	\$5,000
Maine	Westport Island	\$5,000

Maine	Whitefield	\$5,000
Maine	Wilton	\$5,000
Maine	Windsor	\$5,000
Maine	Winslow	\$5,000
Maine	Winterville Plantation	\$5,000
Maine	Wiscasset	\$5,000
Maine	Woodland	\$5,000
Maine	Woolwich	\$5,000
Maine	Yarmouth	\$5,000
Maine	Greene	\$4,698
Maine	Mechanic Falls	\$4,381
Maine	Andover	\$4,088
Maine	Newfield	\$3,470
Maine	Damariscotta	\$3,341
Maine	Randolph	\$3,338
Maine	Mars Hill	\$3,263
Maine	Searsmont	\$3,025
Maine	Lee	\$2,647
Maine	Hancock	\$2,000
Maine	West Bath	\$1,930
Maine	Newburgh	\$1,532
Maine	St. George	\$1,503
Maine	Woodstock	\$1,460