



STATE OF MAINE
COMMISSION ON GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS
AND ELECTION PRACTICES
135 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0135

O.F.P.R.

2009 AUG 27 AM 8:16

COPY

To: Hon. Bill Diamond
Hon. Emily Ann Cain
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and
Financial Affairs

From: Jonathan Wayne, Executive Director JW

Date: August 25, 2009

Re: Priority of Programs of the Maine Ethics Commission

This is in response to your August 18, 2009 memo requesting a list of programs of the Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices, grouped according to priority of the program.

The Commission is a small independent agency. It has seven permanent employees. Our budget consists of three accounts. The smallest part of our budget consists of the General Fund. We have two special revenue accounts, the Maine Clean Election Fund and the account financed by the registration fees paid by lobbyists.

Programs that are in the Core of the Agency's Mission

Maine Clean Election Act. In 1996, Maine voters directly approved an optional public financing program for candidates for the Legislature and for Governor. The law delegated administering the program to the Commission. In recent elections, about 80% of the legislative candidates have participated in the program. This program is financed by the Maine Clean Election Fund.

Disclosure of campaign finance activities. The Commission is the campaign finance disclosure agency for the State of Maine. The Commission receives and reviews campaign finance reports from candidates, political action committees, and the committees of political parties. Most filers provide the information electronically. It is posted on the Commission's website immediately so the public understands how campaigns are financed, who is spending money to influence the political system, and how the money is spent.

Disclosure of lobbyist activities. The Commission is also the lobbyist disclosure agency for the State of Maine. Lobbyists register with the Commission and file

monthly and annual reports. This increases the public's understanding of what interests are influencing the Legislature.

Programs that are Important to the Agency's Mission

Statements of sources of income. The Commission receives annual statements of sources of personal income from Legislators, political candidates, and from employees and officials who hold major-policy influencing positions in the executive branch of state government. In terms of staff time and expense, this is a small program for the Commission.

Legislative ethics. The Commission offers advice to Legislators and others on limited ethics issues, including conflicts of interest, undue influence, and receiving travel reimbursements or other things of value. Occasionally, the Commission receives complaints regarding these issues. This is a relatively small activity of the Commission.