

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2023

Legislative Document

No. 1869

S.P. 753

In Senate, May 2, 2023

An Act to Prohibit the Private Funding of Elections

Reference to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D M Grant'.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator STEWART of Aroostook.

Cosponsored by Senators: BRAKEY of Androscoggin, KEIM of Oxford, TIMBERLAKE of Androscoggin, Representative: ARATA of New Gloucester.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 21-A MRSA c. 9, sub-c. 7** is enacted to read:

3 **SUBCHAPTER 7**

4 **ELECTION FUNDING**

5 **§871. Private funding prohibited**

6 **1. Short title.** This section may be known and cited as "the Prohibition on the Private
7 Funding of Elections Act."

8 **2. Definitions.** As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the
9 following terms have the following meanings.

10 A. "Election" means an election held to nominate or elect a candidate to a public office.

11 B. "Person" means an individual, proprietorship, firm, partnership, joint venture,
12 syndicate, labor union, business trust, company, association, committee or corporation,
13 whether or not operated for profit, or any other organization or group of persons acting
14 in concert or any other nongovernmental 3rd-party entity.

15 C. "Public funds" means funds derived from taxes, fees and other sources of public
16 revenue lawfully appropriated by the Legislature.

17 **3. Prohibition on private funds.** Notwithstanding any provision of law to the
18 contrary, a public official may not solicit, take or otherwise accept from any person a
19 contribution, donation or anything else of value for purposes of conducting state or local
20 elections. All costs and expenses relating to state or local elections must be paid for with
21 public funds.

22 **4. Construction.** This section may not be construed to apply to the donation or use of
23 a location for voting purposes, services that are provided without remuneration or goods
24 that have a nominal value of less than \$100.

25 **5. Violation.** A violation of this section is a Class C crime.

26 **SUMMARY**

27 This bill provides that a public official may not solicit, take or otherwise accept from
28 any person a contribution, donation or anything else of value for purposes of conducting
29 state or local elections. It requires that all costs and expenses relating to state or local
30 elections must be paid for with public funds. A violation of the prohibition is a Class C
31 crime.