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AkPIRG: Clean Elections is the Solution to Political Corruption

70% of Alaskans Favor Clean Elections

Anchorage - The Alaska Public Interest Research Group (AkPIRG) released poll results today on “Clean Elections,” a new manner of funding election campaigns that will remove corporate and special interest money from the political process. A poll conducted for AkPIRG by Craciun Research showed that 69.8% of Alaskans surveyed favor Clean Elections.

“Alaska needs Clean Elections now. This isn't just a few bad apples, the whole systems needs to change,” stated AkPIRG Director Steve Cleary, referring to the recent bribery and corruption scandals that are rocking Alaska politics.

Clean Elections are publicly-funded elections in which candidates gather a required number of signatures and small donations to qualify for public funding. Candidates also agree to strict spending limits in exchange for the funding.

Cleary said Clean Elections laws are working in other states and localities – from Maine to Arizona. The Connecticut Legislature passed a Clean Elections law in response to major corruption in 2005. In Arizona, after 4 election cycles using Clean Elections, 83% of voters support the system. The current governor of Arizona was elected using Clean Elections financing, as were the secretary of state, attorney general, and 38 of the state’s legislators.

In Maine, the system is equally popular. Eighty one percent of candidates used Clean Elections financing in 2006, up from 78% in 2004, and 60% in 2002. An April 2007 report by the Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices finds that Clean Elections has sharply

reduced private contributions to candidates; provided more choices for voters; controlled the growth in spending by legislative candidates; and leveled the playing field between candidates for public office.

“Clean Elections has been a breath of fresh air for the states that have it. No longer are special interest donors able to call in favors for the big campaign contributions they made,” Cleary continued. “Clean Elections really puts people back in charge of their democracy, and it puts the people's trust back in the political process. That's exactly what Alaska needs – right now.”

Complete Clean Elections poll available on request.

For background information on Clean Elections, please see: www.publiccampaign.org