



PRESS RELEASE
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Fair Elections Portland Files Suit Against the City of Portland

[PORTLAND, ME] – Today, Fair Elections Portland (FEP) and 15 Portland voters filed suit against the City of Portland over the City’s continued refusal to place a ballot question before voters.

The ballot question seeks to allow Portland Voters a chance to vote on a charter amendment to create a Clean Elections system for Mayor, City Council, and School Board races.

“The people of Portland deserve the chance to vote on this measure. They followed all the legal requirements and there is tremendous public support for this measure,” said FEP attorney John Brautigam. “We are going back to court to protect their right, and that of others who care about democracy. We refuse to let the City’s obstruction be the last word.”

Although the Portland City Clerk verified over 6,800 signatures on the 2019 petition and certified the measure for the ballot, Corporation Counsel advised the City Council to withhold the measure from the ballot. Corporation Counsel advised the City Council that the measure did not meet the criteria to be considered a charter amendment.

“Stripped of the City’s exaggerated claims and false statements, the Measure’s sole effect on City government: it would mandate that the City create a municipal ‘clean elections’ program,” said attorney Ben Gaines. “This is exactly the kind of change that the people have a right to bring to their fellow voters. At one-one-thousandth of the current budget, the impact of such a requirement on the City’s operations would be trivial.”

FEP filed its first suit against the City in September 2019. After extensive litigation, the Law Court ruled in June 2021 that the City had failed to provide an explanation for its position and remanded the case to the City for further proceedings. The Law Court noted that the City's argument was lacking in factual support and that the City's position was not obvious on the basis of available information.

On October 18, 2021 the City Council once again considered the proposed charter amendment, and again followed the instructions of Corporation Counsel to keep the measure off the ballot.

The suit was filed in Cumberland County Superior Court. FEP will ask the Court for a prompt resolution.

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[Fair Elections Portland](#) is a campaign of the League of Women Voters of Maine and Maine Citizens for Clean Elections. For more about the campaign please email info@fairelections.org