

TABOR NOW

LOWER TAXES. MORE JOBS.

STATEMENT OF DAVID P. CROCKER
STATE CHAIRMAN, QUESTION 4 (TABOR) CAMPAIGN
BEFORE THE MAINE ETHICS COMMISSION, OCTOBER 1, 2009

Good morning, my name is David Crocker and I have the honor of serving as state chairman of the New Taxpayer Bill of Rights Campaign.

First, I would like to commend the Commission staff on their thorough work in this matter. Second, I will state for the record that I have no further evidence to present to the Commission. The TABORNOW campaign is perfectly willing to accept the various representations of the Maine Center for Economic Policy, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Maine People's Alliance and Maine Can Do Better, although I note that CBPP's travel expenses seem to round to the nearest hundred, a feat I've never been able to manage in thirty-five years of travel.

That being said, however, the TABOR campaign has no desire to turn what appear to be peccadillos into hanging offenses, nor are we willing to impugn the integrity of the organizations complained against. While we disagree on matters of policy, we are willing to accept our opponents' representations to this Commission, made in good faith.

I must point out, however, that our presumption of integrity is more than I can say about certain individuals who've appeared repeatedly before this Commission to dog the steps of the Maine Heritage Policy Center and Maine Leads.

But the infractions committed by certain of the respondents illustrates the larger problem with section 1056-B and the workings of this Commission. I would point out that the organizations complained against are not in the status of amateurs – on the contrary, they're sophisticated organizations and yet they've stubbed their toes on section 1056-B and if they've come to grief I can't help but think that 1056-B is nothing more than a trap for the unwary.

We've heard this morning about section 1056-B's ambiguities both from Mr. Billings and during the Commission's subsequent discussions. I can only hope that the Legislature takes note. I am sure that there are people in Maine who might be quite surprised to find themselves before this body subject to sanctions and even fines who in their innocence thought they were merely engaging in participatory democracy.

If anyone in the Legislature is listening, I would suggest designing a rule that is clear and bright – easy to understand and follow. Bright line rules are always a good thing in the law, and particularly in the political process – rules that inform the participant instantly whether he is in compliance without ambiguity. The idea, after all, is to facilitate and not stifle participatory democracy.

In conclusion, the Maine TABOR campaign is willing to accept our opponents' representations and the staff's recommendations without further investigation into this matter.

Thank you for your time and attention.