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## **Our Power Responds to Secretary of State's Signature Announcement for Citizens Initiative regarding "No Blank Checks" campaign**

January 26, 2023

AUGUSTA, ME | Today, Maine's Secretary of State Shenna Bellows announced the certification of petitions for the "No Blank Checks" campaign, qualifying the petition for the November 2023 ballot with 68,807 signatures – only 1,125 signatures over the threshold of 67,682.

The "No Blank Checks" campaign is [fully funded by Central Maine Power's owners, Avangrid](#). Previously, they [claimed that they had collected 103,915 total signatures](#), or as the Press Herald wrote, "far more than required." Later, the campaign claimed that they withheld over 10,000 upon submission. Given 103,915 signatures, Sec. Bellows' decision means that more than one third of the signatures collected were invalid.

For their signature collection effort, "No Blank Checks" retained an out-of-state, paid signature collection firm, Second Street Associates, based out of Washington D.C. They, in tandem with Maine Affordable Energy, another Avangrid-funded ballot question committee supporting their effort, have paid the firm over \$2.5 million so far.

Bill Dunn of Yarmouth, a lead petitioner with Our Power and a utility consultant with 50 years of experience in the industry, questioned CMP's business acumen. "If they waste so much money on such a lousy outcome, no wonder they do such a lousy job running our utility."

Holland Corson, a grassroots volunteer who collected signatures with the Our Power campaign, interacted with paid signature collectors from Second Street Associates: "It was painful to watch CMP's out-of-state signature collectors lie to voters and repeatedly break signature collection laws. It's not what our referendum process is for."

Andrew Blunt, Executive Director of Our Power commented on the announcement: "The bottom line is that CMP bought signatures from Maine voters at \$25 a pop. "No Blank

Checks” signature collectors openly misled voters and repeatedly broke the law, and helped CMP buy their way onto the ballot.

“What if instead of buying elections and constantly raising our rates, CMP finally cut rates for hardworking Maine people?” Blunt continued.

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