

To: House Committee on Rules

From: Evan Preston, OSPIRG

Date: March 25, 2013

Re: Testimony regarding House Bill 2419

Chair Garrett and Members of the Committee,

OSPIRG does not support House Bill 2419 because it weakens some current disclosure requirements and creates new loopholes for evading disclosure of campaign finances.

OSPIRG believes transparency in political campaign finances is necessary, though not sufficient, for ensuring the public's faith in our democracy. The people of Oregon have repeatedly supported efforts to increase their ability to know the sources of a candidate's campaign funds. Voters from across the political spectrum and even United States Supreme Court Justices of otherwise divergent views, all agree on the importance of disclosure of the sources and amounts of campaign funds. Voters must know who is funding a candidate or a campaign in order to make an informed decision about how to cast their vote.

In the digital era, Oregon should be moving as close to instant disclosure as possible. Thus, Oregon **lawmakers should not decrease any disclosure requirements.** House Bill 2419 weakens current disclosure law by changing the seven day reporting requirement after receipt of contribution to a 14 day disclosure requirement during the 42 days before an election. Although House Bill 2419 increases disclosure for contributions of more than \$1,000 during the last 14 days before an election, potentially unlimited individual contributions of just under \$1,000 could escape disclosure before the election was held. For example, multiple individual contributions of \$999 made within 14 days of an election would, under this proposal, face only a requirement to report 14 days after receipt. This means voters would not be able to track who is making these contributions to candidates and campaigns during the crucial last days before an election when public attention is often at its highest. Ultimately, transparency in campaign finances is only truly meaningful if all political funds are made transparent.

Consequently, OSPIRG does not support House Bill 2419 because it weakens some current disclosure requirements and creates new loopholes for evading disclosure of campaign finances.