



March 25, 2013

Testimony in Support of HB 2018

Chair Garrett, members of the committee. For the record my name is Noah Manger and I'm the Program Director at the Bus Project. I'm here today to encourage you to support HB 2018 to increase the transparency of Oregon's elections.

The entry point for many young Oregonians on the route to civic participation is voting in their first elections. The Bus Project wants to make sure that these first experiences with our election system are positive: that they build trust in our government and instill the belief that each vote truly counts. One of the best ways we can do this is by making our elections as transparent as possible.

Independent expenditures have exploded across the country in recent years, often functioning as a secretive way for groups to influence elections outside the normal scope of campaign finance regulation. Fortunately, IEs are a much smaller problem in Oregon, but nonetheless they do exist and should be held to the same standard as all other campaign finance transactions.

Oregon is lucky to have a tremendous online database of the money that is contributed and spent by campaigns. But for a small set of outside "independent" groups, their cash expenditures aren't reported online like the rest of Oregon's campaign finance activity. Instead, those contributions are reported on a paper form which is then scanned and linked to on a page of the Secretary of State's website up to 7 days after the transaction was filed. This page is four clicks off the homepage, in a completely separate section from OreStar, and presents a list of non-descript links to these PDFs.

In 2012, nearly a half a million dollars was reported via these paper forms, known as PC 10s. In 2010, that amount was \$909,000. This is not a Democratic problem or a Republican problem. Rather, these IEs support candidates of all stripes and every independent expenditure should be held to the same standard.

Oregonians look to OreStar to understand the financial activity behind our elections. This information is crucial to making informed decisions as voters. HB 2018 is a small but meaningful fix that will bring the regulation of IEs in line with the way we do everything else, and will increase the transparency of our elections in the process.

Thank you for your time.