

**Testimony in support of HJM 2, April 1, 2015**  
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Chair Hoyle, members of the committee, I am Charlie Swanson from Eugene, a member of We the People-Eugene. There are very few things that large majorities of Republicans, Democrats, and independents agree on – but one with overwhelming agreement is that there is too much money in politics, and with even stronger agreement, that there is too much corporate money in politics. The strongest action that the legislature can take this session to begin to address this problem is passing either HJM 2 or HJM 4. Since the convention called for in these applications, or more likely Congress in preventing such a convention, will decide on the words of an amendment, which application is passed is not nearly as important as one of them passing. But to be most useful, the legislature should appropriately describe the problem to be addressed in an amendment.

It is important that the legislature reaffirms that the problem includes money in politics generally, not just money in elections. HJM 6, which passed in 2013, and HJM 4 under consideration by the house rules committee, both recognize this. HJM2 should be amended to change the phrase in the fourth whereas from “those who spend excessively in elections, through campaigns or third-party groups” to “those who spend excessively to influence governmental or political decisions”.

The courts have long correctly recognized that spending a little money to disseminate political arguments is among the most important aspects of free speech that needs first amendment protection. Courts have also affirmed that the state has a compelling interest in limiting corruption, and that campaign finance laws narrowly tailored to do so are appropriate limitations on freedom of speech. The court shocked many when they unequivocally rejected the promotion of equality as a basis for limiting contributions or spending in *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976). This is the most fundamental problem to be addressed by an amendment. HJM 2 should be amended to add a “whereas” something like:

“Whereas, in *Buckley v. Valeo*, the court inappropriately rejected promoting equality of political influence as a compelling state interest;”

The proposed HJM 4 and 2013’s adopted HJM 6 both recognize that court given corporate “rights” are inappropriate, and that people and corporations are politically different. People need to retain their first amendment right to assemble, and to not lose their rights even if they are assembled in a corporate form. But corporations themselves have no opinions. Another “whereas” should be added to HJM 2, something along the lines of:

“Whereas, only organizations funded solely by human beings for the purpose of furthering their joint political views may legitimately represent those views;”

In order to make these changes have some weight, the phrase in section 1 of the resolved portion should be changed from “...relating to free and fair elections...” to “...addressing the problems described in the findings above...”.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony to the committee.