



CHIP SHIELDS
STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 22
N/NE PORTLAND
OREGON STATE LEGISLATURE

April 21st, 2015

Chair Rosenbaum and members of the committee:

For the record my name is Chip Shields and I represent District 22, N/NE Portland, in the Oregon State Senate. I am writing to urge your support of SJR 5 and SB 75.

Oregon is only one of six states with no campaign contribution limits. Our elections have become among the most expensive in the country, with candidates needing to raise ridiculously large amounts of money to compete with the interests of millionaires. The lack of campaign contribution limits has made Oregon a target for out of state interests, with thousands of dollars being poured into state races, and millions of dollars being funneled into the races of our federal delegation. The cost of competing in Oregon elections limits the potential of middle class Oregonians to run for office and gives voters the sense that their voices do not matter.

In Oregon, one person can give millions to a candidate. The law invites a sort of political arms race, with competing millionaires pumping millions into their favored campaigns. As such, our elections become among the most expensive in the country. The average amount that an Oregon House candidate had to raise in 2012 was the sixth-highest in the nation. Even though their districts have fewer people than those in Florida and New York, our candidates have to raise more money. Our 2014 elections were among the priciest in the country, with state candidates raising \$37 million.

Currently the legislature is not able to act on the issue because it does not have the authority. SJR 5, filed at the request of Governor Kate Brown in her prior role as Secretary of State, would permit the legislature or voters to establish campaign limits within the Oregon Constitution. If passed, the legislature could approve a constitutional amendment which would subsequently be referred to voters for November 2016. It would send a powerful message to voters that the legislature hears their concerns and that their voices matter.

I would like to thank the committee for taking up this bill. We need your help to pass SJR 5. Oregonians need to know that they are more important than big donors. Give them the ability to vote on the issue by passing SJR 5. The bill is ready and the time is now.

Sincerely,

Chip Shields

Oregon State Senator
District 22, N/NE Portland

