

LAURIE MONNES ANDERSON
State Senator



STATE SENATE
DISTRICT 25

21 April 2015

Chair Rosenbaum and Members of the committee, my name is Laurie Monnes Anderson. I am the State Senator representing District 25, which includes Gresham, Troutdale, Fairview and Wood Village. I am writing to urge your support on Senate Joint Resolution 5.

So far, 44 states in the country have implemented contribution limits for their candidates. Oregon is just one of six remaining states that have no limits whatsoever. Oregonians voted to pass contribution limits in both 1994 and 2006, but the Oregon Supreme Court stated that there must be explicit constitutional authorization to implement these kinds of limits. The Legislature needs the authority to respond to this problem, and SJR 5 would give us the tool to do so. SJR 5, which Kate Brown introduced in December 2014 when she was still Oregon's Secretary of State, is very straightforward. It would grant authority to the Legislature or the voters to establish necessary campaign contribution limits. After legislative approval of an amendment to the Oregon constitution, it would then be referred to the voters for November 2016.

This reform is an important step toward limiting the influence of "mega-donors" in our elections. Without reform, those who can't afford to contribute to elections are always at risk of being neglected over the thousand-dollar checks. Contribution limits act to keep the voices of middle- and working-class Oregonians in equal standing as those who donate hundreds or thousands every election. If we establish this in our constitution, it will protect the people's right to put limits in place, as they voted to do so in 1994 and 2006. To put it simply: contributions limits help raise up the voices of every day Oregonians. These Common sense limits will also have an immediate effect when you look at the cost of competing in Oregon elections. My elections are extremely costly. Being in a competitive swing district, I had to raise close to \$1 million dollars my last Senate race. This is what makes it so hard for middle class Oregonians to run for office.

Chair and Members this is not a partisan issue. Democrats, Republicans, Independents, and Non-Affiliated voters alike all strongly support contribution limits. It is time that we as Legislators listen to our constituents on this matter. It is time we give them the opportunity to vote on contributions, this time with constitutional authority for implementation. Please support SJR 5. Thank you.

Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson

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