

It's pretty difficult to find an Oregonian with a pulse and blood flowing to their brain who thinks that our Oregon Democracy is working well.

An overwhelming majority of Oregonians believes that the influence of money in politics is a huge problem, and we face both real corruption and perceptions that have fueled a corrosive cynicism about our governing processes.

While we know campaign contribution limits will be imperfect, just making them clearly constitutional seems like a no-brainer, and just common sense. That part should be so easy, and so obvious. Well, we've learned that politics doesn't work like that. There are always powerful special interests who fear and oppose any change, no matter how just, simply because they think the status quo is serving them well. Why risk anything that might - just might - put at risk their current level of influence?

And that's why some fear that the legislature might fail at referring this constitutional amendment to the voters - even though it is so simple and makes so much sense - and is an idea that is widely supported by everyday people outside the insider political circles, be they conservatives or liberals.

You probably already know that if the legislature does fail to refer this constitutional amendment, it is all but certain that it will appear as an initiative on the ballot in 2016. It is being actively worked on today. If that occurs, it will be a sad day for the legislature and all of you. The legislature will lose in two ways. First, you all will lose face. Think about it - the people of Oregon forced to act because the legislature is too beholden to special interests to make this referral. That's ugly, especially when you think how this will be portrayed as an initiative - the people standing up to say that Citizens United is not the law of Oregon - standing up and using their right of petition because the legislature could not act on their own to do the right thing for fear of upsetting some special interests.

And if this moves forward as an initiative, the legislature will also lose control. Today, there seems to be wide agreement that putting Measure 47 as it was written into effect would be a big mistake. You can easily correct that with a minor tweak to this referral, and I recommend that you do just that. But if this moves ahead as an initiative you won't have that control, and who can say what will end up happening.

So in Oregon we have taxation, but don't always have representation - that effectively has become mostly a matter of money. I encourage you to

change that now, and to give all the people of Oregon a chance at fair and equal representation. What is before you is a significant step in that direction. I encourage you to stand up and have the courage to just say no to those who fear a just and needed reform, because they believe it just might not help their special agenda.

If on the other hand, you are unconvinced that change is needed, if you are one of those who thinks all that money buying elections in Oregon is just hunky dory, well then I am worried about you, and whether you truly do have a pulse. But I do have my cell phone with 911 on speed dial, so the EMTs will be here soon!

Thank you.