



KATE BROWN
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REMARKS AS PREPARED

Testimony on Campaign Finance Reform

April 21, 2015

Good afternoon, Chair Rosenbaum, Members of the Committee. My name is Kate Brown and I'm serving as Oregon's Governor, here today to testify briefly in favor of campaign finance limits.

Although my title and position has recently transitioned, my voice on this issue has been steadfast through my years in public service. I care about money in politics. And that's why I am here today. SJR 5 is a constitutional amendment that would create the much-needed opportunity for a thoughtful dialogue on what reasonable campaign finance limits in Oregon could and should look like.

According to *The Oregonian*, more than **\$23 million dollars** was spent on Legislative races in 2014 alone. To offer a bit of perspective, that is more per capita than just about any other state in the nation. No one should be able to buy a megaphone so big that it drowns out every other voice. The First Amendment was intended to protect political discourse for all Oregonians, not just those with the deepest pockets.

Speech, political speech especially, is fundamental to our great state and our great nation. In fact, the free speech protections in the Oregon Constitution are often interpreted as even stronger than protections offered under the U.S. Constitution.

SJR 5 does not threaten or undermine individual rights afforded under either Constitution. Instead, by amending Article II, section 8 of the Oregon Constitution, the part of the Constitution that addresses elections policy, SJR 5 would make it possible to consider law changes, such as those in SB 75, that would significantly curtail the role money plays in Oregon politics – without, and most importantly— undermining Oregonians' First Amendment rights.

Truly representative leadership and access to decision-making roles requires meaningful change to the status quo. We can't begin to address the status quo until we address the constitutional issues. SJR 5 is that beginning.

Oregonians have time and again proven that they want campaign finance reform. It's our job as state policy makers to find the best way to accomplish it.

Again, thank you for having me.

