

Madam Chair, vice chair, members of the committee, my name is Matt McNally and I drove here today from Southeast Portland as a citizen concerned about the state of our democracy. For the record, I reside at 2309 SE Main St in Portland, Oregon.

In 2012, I graduated with a degree in Political Science as someone interested in promoting policies that promote economic and civic opportunity for all, at a time when economic inequality has reached unprecedented levels. With our current policies, we are seeing that economic inequality bleeds into civic inequality and that leads to policies that support the status quo, not working class Oregonians.

That is why I am here today to testify in support of SJR 5. As a former employee of the political organization American Bridge, I witnessed firsthand that getting elected is more about fund raising and less about ideas. Without limits on campaign contributions, the expense of every new election will continue to surpass the previous. When I see candidates holding dinner parties for hundreds or even thousands of dollars per plate, it is difficult to not lose faith in the system when you are struggling to even put a dinner on your table. As someone with strong political passions, I have never contributed more than \$15 to a candidate in my life, simply because I live paycheck to paycheck and do not have that luxury. This is why the idea that money is free speech is problematic. The American and Oregon constitution promise equal protection under the law,

but if money is synonymous with speech, then people like me no longer have a voice in our civic process. To me, it doesn't make sense that someone can have more free speech than others, not to mention this interpretation of speech is not free.

This is a systematic problem. In a modern election, a candidate can not run a viable campaign without substantial sums of money. If the legislature passes SJR 5, candidates could have more time to focus on policy and constituent interaction. It could also create less obstacles for ordinary people interested in running for office. This is a non-partisan issue that could start repairing the trust many Oregonians have lost in our political process, especially in the wake of recent events.

I urge you to pass this bill so that the voice of regular Oregonians like myself are not drowned out by the special interests and corporations that currently dominate the election process.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Matt McNally
2309 SE Main Street
Portland, OR 97214