

Testimony for campaign finance limits

Madam Chair, vice chair, members of the committee, my name is Ruth Gundle; I live at 624 SE 29th, Portland 97214. I have lived and worked in Oregon since 1975. I was an attorney for many years, during which I wrote legislation and litigated cases on women's rights issues and taught at Lewis and Clark Law School.

I am here to voice my support for Senate Joint Resolution 5. I am not representing any organization but I know that my views are widely shared. Oregon voters have twice expressed their support for reasonable campaign contribution limits by significant margins.

Since my years as a women's rights activist I have been a supporter and activist for other important causes as well, including lesbian and gay rights, animal rights, and protecting the environment. And I've watched as mega-donations from wealthy individuals and large corporations—both within Oregon and from outside—tried to, or successfully subverted the democratic process by drowning out important debate with truckloads of money.

I'm not only concerned with the fundamental unfairness of this situation, but also with how it leads many to be cynical about participating in the political process whether as a candidate for office or a citizen working on a campaign or ballot measure, or even, simply, voting. Many assume that elected officials will do the bidding of mega donors, or are demoralized at the considerable struggle of going up against wealthy interests.

We must stop the possibility of mega-contributions overwhelming hard-working committed citizen groups working on important issues, by joining the 44 states that have limits to campaign contributions. I hope you will support this bill.