

June 10, 2015



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Oregon Progressive Party Position on Bill at 2015 Session of Oregon Legislature:

HB 2058: Oppose

Dear Committee:

The Oregon Progressive Party opposes HB 2058, which allows registered lobbyists in Oregon to stop reporting most of their expenditures to the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGEC).

We find ourselves in the rare position of agreeing with an editorial in the Bend Bulletin (attached), which pointed out that this bill would relieve lobbyists of the obligation to report all but \$92,000 of the over \$26 million actually spent on lobbying in Oregon in 2014.

This 99.6% reduction in reporting of such spending seems particularly inappropriate in light of the recent events that caused the resignation of Governor Kitzhaber. Oregon needs more disclosure of money in politics, not less, and lobbying spending is definitely part of money in politics.

Please include this statement in the legislative record for this bill.

Thank you.



Editorial: Vote no on lobbying bill;

bendbulletin.com (<http://www.bendbulletin.com/opinion/2945669-151/editorial-vote-no-on-lobbying-bill>) · March 8, 2015

Search your memory. Is there a worse time in Salem for lobbyists to want less disclosure of their activities?

But that's indeed what they are pushing for with House Bill 2058. It would make permanent the exemption from reporting to the state ethics commission when one lobbyist lobbies another lobbyist.

Your first question might well be: What are lobbyists doing lobbying other lobbyists?

They apparently do that sort of thing to build coalitions behind legislation and policy matters. And they also might do quite a bit of it.

The Oregon Capital Insider reported that in 2014, "companies, interest groups and other entities reported spending \$26 million on lobbyists but lobbyists only reported spending \$92,000 on the people they lobbied."

There is something — or several somethings — missing.

The fact is, lobbyists currently report spending only on lawmakers and other people who fall under the category of legislative and executive officials. They did not believe they had to report lobbyist-to-lobbyist lobbying until 2013, when the Oregon Government Ethics Commission issued an advisory opinion, The Oregon Capital Insider reported.

Lobbyists got a temporary break from reporting in 2013. That exemption is to expire this year. That's why House Bill 2058 was introduced.

Reporting on the spending of lobbyists is a tremendous improvement on the lack thereof. It's really helpful to Oregonians, though, only if it gives them a good picture of how the money is sloshing around in Salem and around the state. Rules for lobbying at the federal level attempt to capture lobbying effort more broadly than Oregon's laws would if HB 2058 were passed.

We don't know what was going on with the influence and lobbying that was coming out of former Gov. John Kitzhaber's office and from his fiancée, Cylvia Hayes. But it doesn't give the impression that Oregonians should know less.

Ron Bersin, the executive director of the Oregon Government Ethics Commission, says lawmakers should vote no on this bill. And so do we.