

Chair, members of the committee, thank you for your time today.

My name is Colby Clipston, and I'm a native Oregonian. One of the values I was raised with was to always stand up for what I believed was right, and to try to make the change I wanted to see in the world. During my time at UofO studying political science this value was my main motivation, because if I truly wanted to help change the world for the better I needed to first better understand how things worked. Unfortunately, the more I learned, the more frequently I came across the phrase "follow the money". It seems patently obvious to me now, but back then it didn't really sink in just how much money influenced our political system. Yet, even then, I still knew in my gut that something about that was wrong. For better or for worse, I had bought into the accounts from our Founding Fathers about how this country was supposed to be the Shining City on a Hill, a beacon for democracy everywhere. It deeply pains me to submit to you today, that at the Federal level, I don't believe that democracy exists anymore. I couldn't get a meeting with my Federal Senator if my life depended on it, and that is the very antithesis of democracy, because too often lives do depend on what laws are written. In that darkness though shines a ray of hope - hope that I've gleaned from my experience here, working with you and your colleagues in our State Legislature. Democracy, I'm proud to submit to you today, is alive and well at the state level. While there are certainly disagreements between those in this room, the fact that you're all willing to hear out your constituents today is what gives me hope in our country's future. I want to bring our Federal Legislature back in line with these core American principles; get us to where we can once again have an honest battle of ideas where both sides have the interest of the American people at heart, not their powerful special interests.

It is because of this that I urge you to vote yes today on HJM 201. I believe that this is a nonpartisan issue, and hope that we can come together in a unanimous vote to send the message that we will answer Benjamin Franklin's call of keeping our Republic healthy and strong. Thank you.