

## Brian Wanty

February 23, 2017

House Committee on Rules  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE, Room 453  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: HB2578 Establishes Small Donor Funded Elections program to enable candidates for state office to receive 6-to-1 match on small dollar donations.

Chair Williamson and committee members,

Public funding of election campaigns is a good way to reduce the risk of policy capture by private interests. Unchecked, policy capture can erode good governance, equal opportunity, social cohesion, and trust in government. Public policy should not be for sale to the highest bidder.

Money in politics is necessary to allow campaigns to be heard and to foster competitive elections. However, private money can be used by powerful special interests to exert undue influence on the policy process. Even without bribery, private money can slant policy outcomes toward vested interests against the broader public interest. Creating a level playing field also increases the chances of electing persons of high competence and integrity to office.

Public campaign funding complements the ORESTAR disclosure system and government ethics regulations deterring undue influence and promoting transparency. It's also compatible with the strong free speech provisions of both the Oregon Constitution and the United States Constitution by leveling-up funding instead of trying to level-down funding by restricting protected free speech.

After addressing any concerns raised in the public hearing or by legislators, please vote to recommend passage of HB2578.

Regards,

  
Brian Wanty