

My name is Leslie Knight and I live in Corvallis, Oregon. I am a retired attorney and lecturer and strongly support HB 2578. Thank you to my representative, Dan Rayfield, for sponsoring this bill on behalf of the State of Oregon.

Only 153 years after Abraham Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address, our government of, by and for the people is increasingly becoming a government of, by and for corporations and the wealthy.

Despite the holding in *Citizens United*, corporations are not people. They do not have families, they do not need healthcare, and they do not need clean drinking water. Corporations have at their core not the values of ordinary Oregonians, but the goal of maximizing value for their shareholders. And yet, because of current campaign finance laws, corporations are able to wield far more influence over the results of elections than ordinary citizens, resulting in the furtherance of corporate agendas over the interests of ordinary workers and families.

Corporations and the wealthy should not have a greater say in our elections than ordinary Oregonians. The votes of the daycare worker who takes care of your child while you are at work and the clerk who checks out your groceries at the supermarket should be equal to the votes of individuals who are able to donate vast sums of money to campaigns.

HB 2578 will give ordinary Oregonians a bigger voice in state politics, allowing us to elect state officials who actually represent the people and not special interests. Free from the burden of soliciting big money, candidates will be able to campaign by engaging with ordinary voters. Not only will this allow candidates to better understand the needs of their constituents, but it will also encourage citizens to become an active and vital part of the elections process.

In addition, a lack of funds or connections with special interests will no longer be a barrier to candidacy. Individuals from all walks of life will have the opportunity to successfully run for office, encouraging more diverse representation.

By eliminating the need for candidates to rely on big money, HR 2578 will ensure a government of, by and for the people, creating a more vibrant and successful Oregon for all of its citizens.