



**Testimony of Kimberly McCullough, Legislative Director  
In Support of HB 2578  
Senate Committee on Judiciary  
February 28, 2017**

Chair Williamson and Members of the Committee:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon<sup>1</sup> strongly supports Senate Bill 2578, which would establish a small donor funded elections program to enable candidates for state office to receive 6-to-1 match on small dollar donations.

The ACLU of Oregon strongly supports public financing of candidate election campaigns as a way to address the financial barriers in mounting a race for elected office and to counter the influence of wealthy special interests in elections. Public campaign financing also enhances the accountability of public officials to general voters, as they are thereby less obliged to the interests of high-dollar contributors.

The election of public officials is an essential aspect of a free society and the integrity of the electoral process is of critical concern. The ACLU of Oregon also deeply values other civil liberties values—particularly freedom of expression and association—that are sometimes threatened by election campaign reforms. We believe the appropriate response is to expand the resources and venues available for political advocacy, while increasing transparency through campaign finance disclosure requirements. This is why we wholeheartedly support fair and effective public financing systems as an expansion of resources that does not simultaneously limit civil liberties.

In evaluating public financing proposals and laws, the ACLU of Oregon looks to see that the following criteria are met:

- Public funds are equally available to all candidates who meet an objective measure of existing political support;
- Candidates are given a truly voluntary choice to participate;
- The program provides sufficient funding to mount an effective, competitive campaign; and
- The program avoids intrusive or inequitable government regulation or overly burdensome record keeping.

We are pleased to see that HB 2578 meets each of these requirements. Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or concerns.

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<sup>1</sup> The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon (ACLU of Oregon) is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of civil liberties and civil rights. We have more than 28,000 members in the State of Oregon, and that number is growing as we speak.