

House Committee on Rules

February 28, 2017

## House Bill 2444 Testimony in Opposition

Honorable chair & members of the committee:

My name is Gayle Atteberry, and I am the executive director of Oregon Right to Life. **I am writing in opposition to House Bill 2444.**

Oregonians should take pride in our democratic, individual-focused campaign finance system. Because of the Political Tax Credit, Oregon PACs and candidates rely on smaller donations far more than they would otherwise. Thousands of Oregonians take advantage of this opportunity to support candidates or PACs of their choice in a way that levels the playing field between small and large donors.

**These small donations are generally made, however, with an expectation of privacy.** An individual donating \$20 or \$50 to a candidate they heard speak at a local event is typically not politically and publicly active and would be shocked to find their address, employer and political association posted on the internet. HB 2444 appears to do just that by removing the privacy exception for contributors who give an aggregate of \$100 or less in a year.

The public has a reasonable right to know a candidate or PAC's wealthy supporters in order to be aware of what forces are influencing the recipient of the money. Wealthy political donors and corporations already have given up a reasonable expectation of privacy because of their larger donations anyway. There is, however, little reason to think that a \$50 or \$100 donation would unduly influence a candidate or PAC. **Thus HB 2444 is unnecessary and, because of privacy concerns, would discourage the small donations of average Oregonians.**

HB 2444 would lead to PACs depending on larger donations from corporations or wealthy individuals who do not have the same expectation of privacy that a smaller donor assumes. This bill would also have a greater burden on grassroots and union groups who take in more small donations than do corporate PACs.

The Oregon Legislature is right to frequently revisit issues of transparency, enforcement and equality of access in Oregon campaign finance laws. However, we believe HB 2444 approaches these issues from the wrong end. Oregon citizens deserve solutions that encourage more people to get involved in Oregon elections rather than fewer.



## Legislative Testimony

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Please oppose House Bill 2444.

Thank you,

Gayle Atteberry

Oregon Right to Life

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