



TO: House Rules Committee
FR: Nikki Fisher, Executive Director Oregon Bus Project
DA: February 28, 2017
Re: Support for House Bill 2578

Chair Williamson and members of the committee,

My name is Nikki Fisher and I am the Executive Director of the Oregon Bus Project. I also serve as a member of the Campaign Finance Task Force chaired by the Secretary of State. I am here today to support House Bill 2578, the small donor elections bill.

At the Bus Project, we focus on engaging young people in the democratic process by making it fun and accessible. We believe the current campaign finance system does the opposite – it drowns out the voices of the average Oregonians who can't afford to give large sums of money to candidates or campaigns they care about. As a result, most voters – especially Millennials – no longer believe that their elected officials are working for them. They believe that elected officials are skewing public policy in favor of wealthy special interests.

We need to build a democracy where everyone participates, every vote is counted, and everyone's voice is heard. The Small Donor Elections program lets candidates win with only the support of everyday Oregonians, not large campaign contributors.

When everyone is empowered in our elections, it won't just be the big donors or lobbyists that our candidates are listening to. It'll be ordinary people—working families and young people and students, people historically passed over when our candidates spend a lot of time raising big money to be competitive. And when candidates can spend more time talking with more ordinary Oregonians, they can better understand and represent us in office.

The Small Donor Elections program will take straightforward steps to raise the voices of everyday people, reduce the influence of big money, and ensure that everyone's voice is heard in our government. The Bus Project asks for your support.

Thank you for your time and consideration.