

TAKE BACK OUR REPUBLIC

To: House Rules Committee
Re: HB 4076 - Small Donor Elections
Date: February 8, 2018

Chair Williamson and fellow committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. Take Back Our Republic support HB 4076.

Take Back Our Republic is committed to a government “of the people, by the people, and for the people” not one beholden to big business and union influence. We believe that once individuals better understand these issues and understand that there are many more like them who share their disdain for the status quo, the natural outgrowth of this understanding will be a better engaged and more involved citizenry.

Take Back Our Republic believes that individual participation in the American political system is the best way to preserve and strengthen our liberty. We engage in research, education, and advocacy about returning political power to individuals and ending the system of escalating campaign contributions by corporations, labor unions and special interests that fuels government spending. We believe politicians should be responsible to the people and not to self-serving moneyed interest who seek government subsidies and special treatment at a significant cost to taxpayers.

The Small Donor Elections bill will ensure every voice matters in Oregon politics by making small donors a more powerful force in elections and reducing the need for candidates to rely on wealthy donors.

We believe Oregon needs a Small Donor Elections program to unrig the rules of our democracy and break down barriers to running for office.

Currently, the rules of our democracy are rigged in favor of wealthy donors. Since Citizens United, wealthy special interest organizations, and donors have been able to increase their influence on local, state, and federal elections. If we want to make progress on the most pressing issues facing our state, we must ensure our democracy is working for everyone, not just special interests. We urge the legislature to act without delay to pass the Small Donor Elections bill, so that voters can rest assured our legislators are free of big money influence and able to focus on the solving the issues that concern their community most.

Small donor programs around the country have shown they break down the systemic barriers that shut out historically marginalized groups from participating in our democracy by increasing the number of small donors, especially among communities of color and low-income households. By creating a small donor election program in Oregon, we can help make sure the people and communities that are historically disenfranchised, are centered in our democracy. Participating candidates who agree to accept contributions only from small donors will have

these contributions matched six-to-one with limited public funds. That way, candidates can spend more time talking to ordinary people rather than raising money from affluent ones.

Thank you for your time. The Small Donor Elections bill is a popular proposal that would address deep voter concern that our government is not working for everyday people. As a member of Take Back Our Republic I strongly support the Small Donor Elections program. I urge you to pass the Small Donor Election program swiftly this legislative session to recenter our communities in Oregon's democracy.

Thank You

Justin Hill
Take Back Our Republic