



NAACP

PORTLAND, OREGON
BRANCH

n
PRESIDENT - JO ANN HARDESTY
1ST V.P. - E.D. MONDAINE
2ND V.P. - NONI CAUSEY
SECRETARY - MELISSA LANG
TREASURER - CLEOPHAS CHAMBLISS

February 8, 2018

Chair Williamson & Rules Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 406. I regret I wasn't able to present my testimony in person today.

The NAACP Portland Branch enthusiastically supports HB 4076. Giving a voice to all Oregonians in choosing their elected leaders is an important democracy reform measure that starts to even the playing field for women and people of color who want to contribute to making our state work for us all.

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 such as The NAACP Portland Branch cares passionately about living wage employment, the lack of affordable housing as well as a host of other issues you make decisions on daily.

More recently the rise in white supremacy activities and violence has escalated the need to have more diverse representation that have lived experiences in these arenas.

Our democracy works best, when everyone is involved in the conversation, and our communities are equitably represented. Money's power in politics is a significant barrier preventing talented leaders from our community, particularly women and people of color, from the opportunity to run for and win office. To elect the best people and create a more representative government, we need to address the barriers that prevent ordinary Oregonians from running for office by giving candidates from all backgrounds the opportunity to run, regardless of their connections to wealthy donors.

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 the President, NAACP Portland Branch I strongly support the Small Donor Elections program. I urge you to pass the Small Donor Election program swiftly this legislative session to center our communities in Oregon's democracy.

Thank You

Jo Ann Hardesty, President
NAACP Portland Branch