



**Testimony of Kimberly McCullough, Policy Director
In Support of HB 4076 – Small Donor Elections
House Committee on Rules
02/08/2018**

Chair Williamson and Members of the Committee:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon¹ supports HB 4076, which will establish a small donor funded elections program to enable candidates for state office to receive a 6-to-1 match on small dollar donations. 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.

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. That is why we are a proud member of the Voice for All Oregon Coalition, a diverse grassroots coalition of organizations on the front lines of advancing the interests of Oregon residents, including women, people of color, small businesses, and LGBTQ individuals.

When evaluating public financing proposals and laws, the ACLU of Oregon looks for each of the following criteria, all of which are met in HB 4076:

- 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.

¹ The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon (ACLU of Oregon) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization with more than 42,000 members in the State of Oregon.

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.

The ACLU of Oregon urges you to Support HB 4076. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.