

To: Interim House Rules Committee
From: Cristina Nieves, Common Cause Oregon
Re: Campaign Finance Reform
Date: December 16, 2020

Thank you for inviting testimony from Common Cause.

Common Cause is a nonpartisan organization that works for open, honest, accountable government. We're more than one million Americans – including over 29,000 Oregonians – working together to realize the unfinished promise of democracy. Campaign finance reform is at the heart of realizing this promise.

During this upcoming session, we acknowledge that there are difficult decisions that must be made. We ask that you keep in mind the following:

Voters have called for reform. We just passed M107, ensuring the constitutional authority to enact campaign finance reform, with over 78% support, including at least 2/3rds support in every single county.

Legislators have an interest in reform. Many candidates and elected officials express shared interest to stop the money arms race. You are interested to serve the public, not devote yourself to fundraising.

We all want a democracy powered by voters and fully reflective of our diverse state. Money should not prevent a dedicated and passionate leader from running for office. Every voter, no matter how much money they have, should be able to feel invested in their candidates

Limits, transparency, and public incentives – work best together. Although you may not be ready to enact all three of these crucial components simultaneously, they work best together. You can begin now to plan for a public financing component down the road

Small-donor programs work. The City of Portland's Open and Accountable Elections program has shown remarkable results in its first iteration.

- Over 50% of donors who were surveyed and contributed to Open and Accountable Elections candidates reported it was the first time they had ever given to a campaign for elections for the city of Portland
- A diverse pool of candidates, including the first Latina to be elected to Portland City Council, participated in the program

We urge you to prepare for the necessary reforms ahead and continue to engage stakeholders in the decision-making process during this upcoming legislative session.