

MARK HASS
STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 14



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OREGON STATE SENATE

March 13, 2019

Chairs Burdick and Holvey,
Senate Committee on Campaign Finance
House Committee on Rules

I'm no longer surprised to read how it costs more than a million dollars to get elected as a part-time citizen legislator. I'm no longer surprised to hear how a wealthy individual can donate millions of dollars to a single candidate.

I won't list the eye-popping amounts that show up in candidate disclosure forms – you've seen them. Nor will I cast aspersions on candidates who solicit or receive contributions. Because – there are no rules in Oregon; more specifically, there are no limits on contributions. This is the wild west.

But the wild west was eventually tamed. And that's what we must do here.

As a veteran of this debate, I know the first thing we must do – the first thing – is to ask voters to amend our state constitution. We need them to approve a change to the speech provision so political contributions are no longer a protected form of expression. Otherwise, courts are likely to continue to rule that Oregon's unique speech provision protects all campaign contributions.

Referring a measure to voters and asking them to limit free speech is a heavy lift. We need leadership here – and we need followership.

Oregonians have consistently said they want to limit political campaign contributions. Yet they have also balked at changing the constitution. I ask you to give Oregonians another chance to make this change so that we can put reasonable limits on contributions, limits that will no longer allow special interests to speak with a more powerful voice in our elections.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Hass". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Hass