

To: House Rules & Senate Campaign Finance Committees
From: Kate Titus, Common Cause Oregon
Re: Campaign Contribution Limits (HJR13, SJR13, SJR18)
Date: March 13, 2019

Thank you for inviting testimony from Common Cause.

Common Cause

Common Cause is a nonpartisan organization that works for open, honest, accountable government. We're more than one million Americans – including 25,000 Oregonians – working together to realize the unfinished promise of democracy.

Common Cause urges your leadership for campaign contribution limits.

As you consider legislation referring to voters a decision to clarify the state constitutional authority to set campaign contribution limits and full disclosure, I hope you will keep in mind the following:

- **Across party lines, the public is fed up with money in politics.**
Voters have always supported setting limits on campaign contributions. That's true across political party affiliation. However, in recent years, we are seeing that support spike up over 80% and even 90%, and with increased intensity.
- **Oregon ranks particularly poorly in addressing this problem.**
By now, you've all likely seen the recent Oregonian investigative series "Polluted by Money, How corporate cash corrupted one of the greenest states in America," which has brought renewed attention to the fact that Oregon is one of only 5 states that sets *no limits at all* on campaign contributions, has *among the most expensive campaigns* per capita, and ranks *worst in the country* for corporate cash to lawmakers.
- **Limits are essential, but not enough. We need comprehensive reform.**
The problem of money in politics is complex. That's not an excuse to do nothing (solving complex problems is what you're here for). However, it will take a comprehensive approach. Oregon needs an upper ceiling on campaign contributions like nearly every other state, At the same time, we need to raise the floor with a small donor matching program that makes small contributions meaningful and gives candidates supported by small contributions enough money to get their message out, even when there are independent expenditures. And though we can't currently limit independent spending, we can require full transparency.

We urge you to pass a referral on contribution limits this session, as part of comprehensive campaign finance reform.