

May 23, 2019

TO: House Committee on Rules
FR: Charlie Fisher, State Director, Oregon State Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG)
RE: HB 2983 & HB 2716

OSPIRG supports full disclosure and transparency of all funds used to influence election outcomes. While, transparency alone isn't sufficient to prevent the flow of big money into our elections, it is an important component to a robust campaign finance system.

When crafting transparency and disclosure requirements, we recommend you follow these principles:

1. Ensure disclosure of the true donors rather than pass-through entities.

Replacing one vague-sounding organization for another doesn't provide the public with any more useful information than it already has. True disclosure requires a list of the actual people and/or companies paying for the ad. For example there's a significant difference in terms of useful information made to the public between the "Center for Competitive Politics" and Charles and David Koch. Any disclosure requirement should require the latter, not the former.

2. Disclosures should be required year-round, not limited to a small window of time before elections.

Whether a political ad is run one day or three months before an election, the public has an equal interest in its source of funding. We recommend all disclosures be required year-round.

3. Disclosures should be understandable and easily accessed by the public.

Disclosure and transparency is only as useful as it is understandably and accessible. Disclosures for political ads should be made clearly on the ad itself and displayed large enough and for a long enough time for a regular person to be able to understand its meaning. Donor disclosures for "dark money" groups triggered by overall spending as opposed to in relation to a specific ad should be available online and be easily searchable by the public.