



*The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 101-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.*

March 30, 2021

To: [House Democratic Leader Barbara Smith Warner](#), Chair  
[House Committee on Rules](#)

Re: [HB 2680](#) and [HB 3343](#) – State campaign contribution limits – **Supportive Comments**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon, using its national campaign finance Position, has for decades advocated for comprehensive campaign finance reform to protect Oregon politics from the corrupting influence of huge special interest campaign donations.

With the passage of Measure 107 in November, with the largest number of Yes votes ever in Oregon history for a statewide ballot measure, the legislature must now follow through with statute(s) that implement the voters' will. [HB 2680](#) and [HB 3343](#) together with [SB 336](#) could be the vehicle for accomplishing this goal.

So that we have a stable, balanced campaign finance system, other bills that should be considered in this process are [HB 2921](#) on a small donor matching program, [HB 3235](#) limiting foreign nationals from making campaign contributions, limits on “dark money,” strict coordination rules on independent expenditures, and additional requirements on political ads to disclose the real source of moneys paying for the ads. We understand that -1 and -2 amendments are coming for HB 2921, and that they have some of these features.

These proposed laws are exceedingly complex issues and every legislator has their own opinions on these subjects.

Concerning the details that may be in HB 2921-1 (not yet posted as of this writing), the League would offer the following comments:

- The contribution limits are too high. The limits in HB 3343 are better. The Brennan Center for Justice recently issued a [report on political science research](#) that shows “... lower contribution limits of \$500 or less for individual contributors and political action committees (PACs) made elections for state assembly more competitive.” Such lower limits would help racial and ethnic minorities and women run for office.
- Setting contribution limits is a balancing act. If contribution limits are set too low, then they would not provide enough money in the system to allow voters to be educated about candidates. (Educating voters is very important to the League!) If contribution limits are too high, then incumbents and special interest groups are advantaged.
- Contribution limits should be set for an “individual” not a “person.” A person is defined as any entity or group of people, even informal organizations or clubs. Therefore, two people could form any number of clubs and then be allowed unlimited contributions.
- Consider redefining or eliminating “membership organizations” so that they don’t allow huge flows of money. (Simpler is better!)
- No entity that makes or accepts contributions should be unlimited. Unlimited entities become huge loopholes for the flow of money through the campaign finance system.
- Local governments should be allowed to set their own contributions limits, but not higher than the state limits, which would create a huge loophole.
- Contributions to political parties should be limited for all contributions, not just “for the purpose of” some political activity, which would create a huge loophole.

- Allow citizens to bring actions to enforce these laws. Campaign finance regulations that depend on partisan elected officials enforcing them can create an appearance or reality of bias or selective enforcement.

With the above considerations, the League would prefer HB 3235 over HB 2921.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.



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Cc: [Sen. Jeff Golden](#), [Rep. Dan Rayfield](#), [Rep. Andrea Salinas](#)