

To: House Committee on Rules
Date: March 30, 2021 committee hearing
From: William Vollmer, resident NE Portland
Re: Support for campaign contribution limits and HB3343

Oregon's system of campaign financing is broken and badly in need of reform, and the voters of Oregon endorsed such reform last year when they resoundingly approved Ballot Measure 107. I hope the legislature heard their message loud and clear; it is time to eliminate the undue influence of big money in Oregon politics.

Good campaign finance reform should give more voice to regular people and *limit the ability of wealthy individuals and businesses to dominate the election process*. Furthermore, our campaign finance system *must have transparency and accountability* to restore public confidence. It also *shouldn't favor any one political party* over another, and must *avoid loopholes* and other ways to game the system.

Since the published text of HB2680 available on OLIS still does not include specific dollar limits, I presume the version to be presented today has changed somewhat from the published version. I also assume that HB3343 may have changed as well from the published version currently in OLIS. I have therefore relied on the information provided by Honest Elections Oregon and the Oregon Progressive Party in choosing to support HB3343 and oppose HB2680.

I list below a few of the key concerns for me about HB2680 that these groups have raised.

- The testimony of Honest Elections Oregon has identified many loopholes in the HB2680 that allow the wealthiest donors to get around the ostensible contribution limits in the bill.
- Local governments should not be allowed to nullify limits for local candidates. This loophole also would create a backdoor to funnel big money to other races.
- Don't play favorites by giving the Democratic and Republican caucuses in the Legislature special rights to receive and make huge contributions.
- Don't change the definition of contribution in order to allow unlimited contributions to political parties.
- Self-funded candidates should be required to disclose in their ads how much they are spending on their campaigns.
- We need enforcement that is independent of partisan government officials.

In closing, I'd like to express my own views regarding small donor political committees. I am sensitive to the argument that such entities may unduly advantage union over corporate interests. As noted above, I believe strongly that good campaign finance reform should not inherently favor one political party over another. Consistent with that belief, I feel that such reform should not selectively favor businesses versus unions. While I am willing to be convinced of the need for small donor political committees, for now I don't see why small donor contributions cannot be made directly by given individuals or entities directly to the candidates they support.

Thank you for listening to my concerns.