

March 30, 2021

Support for HB 3343 and Support with Amendments for HB 2680

Chair Smith Warner, Vice-Chair Drazen and members of the House Rules Committee,

Portland Forward is an intergenerational group of activists, organizers, and concerned community members focused on the big-picture changes for the future of our region. One of our organization's key areas of emphasis has been on strengthening and diversifying our democracy by working to restore balance to our campaign finance regulations. Specifically, our members have been integral in the creation of the City of Portland's small donor matching program; 2016's Measure 26-184, which brought campaign contribution limits to Multnomah County races and passed with over 89% of the vote; 2018's Measure 26-200 which brought campaign contribution limits to the City of Portland and passed with over 87% of the vote; and most recently 2020's Measure 107 updating the Oregon Constitution to explicitly allow for reasonable campaign contribution limits and which passed decisively in every county in Oregon while earning the most Yes votes of any measure in Oregon history.

Through the thousands of conversations we've had with Oregonians from all corners of the state and all walks of life, we have learned that people are hungry for the possibility to reduce the distorting role of big money and concentrated wealth in our political system.

We strongly support HB 3343 and the holistic system of limits that it would create on all in-flows and out-flows of candidate campaign funds. Of particular interest to us is that the limits are based at the level where the average Oregonian might be able to see themselves donating to a campaign that they were highly invested in. The feeling that a small donation matters is crucial to bringing more people into our political sphere, as donors, as volunteers, and as candidates. Furthermore HB3343 makes sure that there are no avenues for unlimited contributions to flow through to candidates, which is a necessary component of reducing the role of big money. If loopholes persist that continue to allow for unlimited donations, as we've seen in states across the country, big money will lean into those avenues.

We also recognize the importance of allowing small contributions to be aggregated by trusted organizations into larger contributions, provided those contributions are traceable to individuals giving small donations. The small donors committees established in HB3343 do a good job of achieving this. Lastly, regarding 3343, there is an important value at play in decreasing loopholes and simplifying the overall regulatory structure. A

simpler structure is good for smaller groups and first time candidates who simply can't afford to find loopholes.

With respect to HB 2680, **we applaud Representative Rayfield's leadership on designing a small donor matching program**, and provided that the small donations are connected to individuals' small contributions, we believe this would be a historic addition to Oregon's democracy. The limits component of the -1 amendment are still too high and would not stem the increasing role of wealthy special interests. Additionally there are several ways under HB2680-1 where a motivated donor could still contribute an unlimited amount of money, which we believe is detrimental to the goal of expanding our democracy and bending the cost curve of campaigns in Oregon. Our desired approach with HB2680 would be to isolate the public matching portion and pass it in conjunction with the limits framework described in HB3343.

In closing, it's important to remember that Citizens United affects all 50 states, and yet Oregon consistently has the most expensive or second most expensive elections in the country. This is not sustainable and keeps important perspectives from being able to have their voices heard in our democracy.

We believe the moment is now for the Oregon Legislature to pass meaningful campaign finance reform by enacting real campaign contribution limits and building a new campaign finance system that will continue Oregon's legacy of democracy leadership. We urge you to advance HB 3343 to a work session and ultimately passage in the House. We also support the small donor matching component of HB 2680 and believe that in combination with the limits set in HB 3343 would bring about a new era of participation in Oregon politics.