



March 14, 2021

Re: HB 2680

Dear Chair Smith Warner, Vice Chair Drazan, Vice Chair Holvey, and members of the House Committee on Rules:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of HB 2680 with the -1 amendments**. My name is Jenny Lee, and I am the Managing Director for Building Power for Communities of Color, a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization dedicated to policy and political advocacy for communities of color to help us achieve a more equitable Oregon.

We appreciate the robust discussion around campaign finance reform, and feel that the policies in the -1 amendments strike the right balance by building in key features that reduce money in politics, preserve the ability of emerging 501(c)(4) organizations to mobilize members and engage in elections, increase the ability of more Oregonians to run for office through small donor matching, and provide for increased transparency and accountability.

Advancing racial justice is why we do this work, and advocacy, including supporting candidates and participating in electoral work, is the how. To get there, we must bring in the communities who have had the least access to our political system. We also know that a healthy democracy requires reducing money in politics so working Oregonians have a voice in our elections.

Many emerging organizations working to engage Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) communities in our democracy and policymaking use elections as a core strategy, in addition to other tools such as education, civic engagement, legislative advocacy, and ballot measures around the issues that their communities care about. By engaging BIPOC voters directly in our elections and connecting them to candidates, we can increase and deepen participation, helping ensure that our elected officials are accountable to everyone in our community.

While electoral candidate work is not our organization's primary purpose, having the ability to directly engage our communities in the political process is critical to our mission. As a cross-cultural organization focused on racial justice, we believe that bringing community members of color into politics by contacting voters, learning about issues, and endorsing and supporting candidates creates a more vibrant state. Engaging communities who have been pushed to the margins of our democracy will enable us to find the right policy solutions for all Oregonians. This legislation will create the conditions for increased participation in a healthier democracy by ensuring all communities have the ability to shape our future.

Sincerely,

Jenny Lee
Managing Director