



Re: Support for HB 4024

February 23, 2024

Chair Fahey, Vice Chairs Helfrich and Kropf, members of the Committee:
Building Power for Communities of Color is dedicated to policy and political advocacy for communities of color to achieve a more equitable Oregon. We are the 501(c)(4) affiliate organization of the Coalition of Communities of Color. We urge you to **pass House Bill 4024** this session. While we understand that the final amendment may still have some technical fixes forthcoming, we are optimistic that this compromise approach to campaign finance reform will finally curb the role of big money in our elections and shine a light on how special interests influence our democracy.

Campaign contributions are not enough. It's important that the Coalition's community organizations, which are often some of the most deeply trusted messengers in BIPOC communities, continue to be able to communicate about their candidates of choice and issue advocacy for ballot initiatives. The approach taken in House Bil 4024 will accomplish that in a way that simple, across the board contribution limits would not.

It is also critical to the Coalition's members that new campaign regulations, requirements and their enforcement do not create additional barriers to entry for community organizations. Regular people, especially those who have historically been marginalized from the electoral process, should be able to engage in political communication without having to hire expensive lawyers and accountants. And while we agree that there need to be prompt investigations and meaningful penalties for those who willfully violate campaign finance laws, we appreciate that there is no private right of action available to complainants in this bill, which would result in endless litigation and create an uncertain level of financial risk for community groups.

We know however that one of the best ways to increase access to public service for candidates that come from our communities is to create a publicly funded small donor match program like the one in IP 42. Even under these new campaign finance regulations, it will be true that most candidates need to have a lot of money or a vast number of personal contacts and potential donors to raise enough money to win their elections. This prevents many people of color, working-class people, young people, and anyone without access to wealthy networks from serving in public office. Including a small donor election program in House Bill 4024 would better ensure that regular people who understand our communities have the opportunity to serve in public office.

We appreciate the work of this committee to finally take action to make Oregon's democracy work better. Today, people and businesses with the most money have the most influence over who gets to serve in public office. By passing House Bill 4024, we can limit campaign contributions, protect the voices of trusted community organizations, working people, people of color, and other historically marginalized communities, and get closer to a government that reflects our state and is accountable to us all.

Thank you,

Jenny Lee
Managing Director
Building Power for Communities of Color