



Testimony in Support of HB 4024
Lucy Pierce, Unite Oregon Action
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Chair Fahey, Vice-Chairs Helfrich and Kropf, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of our members in support of HB 4024. My name is Lucy Pierce (she/her) and I am a Political Organizer at Unite Oregon Action. Our organization is led by black, indigenous, people of color, immigrants and refugees, rural communities, and people experiencing poverty. Unite Oregon Action works across urban and rural divides to build a unified political intercultural movement for justice in Oregon.

We believe in sharing power, opportunities, and resources to ensure equitable participation and representation in an increasingly multicultural society. And we believe that the people most affected by injustice should be the individuals and communities leading and advocating for solutions. As such, Unite Oregon Action plays a crucial role in making sure that our members, who span many different backgrounds and communities that have been historically marginalized from political participation, have trusted information on how to participate in Oregon's democracy and support candidates that share our values.

Our strength comes from the strength of our members, not from traditional forms of capital that have been valued in electoral spaces. In our current campaign finance system, our voices will never be the loudest because we cannot write the biggest checks. The voices of our members are frequently drowned out by wealthy donors or special interest groups who can fund advertising campaigns without any transparency or accountability.

That is why we are supporting House Bill 4024. While this policy is not perfect, we do believe it represents a meaningful compromise approach that will make a difference in our democracy. It is crucial that any meaningful campaign finance reform do several things:

- Create reasonable caps on campaign contributions that will level the playing field between everyday people and wealthy individuals and corporations. But those



limits should not be so low that candidates cannot reasonably keep up with the cost of communicating to voters, otherwise we end up with a system where people in our communities may not have the opportunity to hear the messages, values and stories of the people asking for their votes.

- Maintain the ability for trusted community organizations like Unite Oregon Action to meaningfully participate in electoral campaigns, without creating unreasonable barriers to entry or forcing us into independent expenditure campaigns that have the same issues as our current system where the people with the most money have the loudest voices.
- Create new transparency systems and improve existing transparency systems, so that all voters can know which entities are spending to influence our elections. Transparency provisions in campaign finance addresses a long-standing concern among Black and brown voters by shedding light on the sources of funding behind political campaigns
- Create a small donor elections program where public funds are used to amplify the voices of small individual donors so that candidates from non-traditional backgrounds can successfully raise the money needed to run for office.

HB 4024 aims to reduce and unveil the influence of big-money interests that often prioritize their own agendas over the needs of marginalized communities. While we are disappointed that this policy does not go far enough by introducing a small donor elections program, the other provisions in this bill will improve faith in our democracy.

The time to pass meaningful campaign finance reform is here – in fact we are long past it. We are happy to see Oregon legislators taking on this very real challenge with a thoughtful approach. Unite Oregon Action asks you to support our membership by voting yes to move a campaign finance reform solution this session.