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Testimony on SB 1510 (Introduced)

Senate Bill 1510 makes technical amendments to state election laws to improve clarity and consistency issues. Following is a brief summary of each section for your consideration.

Section 1-2 generally, campaign finance transactions must be reported within 30 days. Beginning on the 42 day before an election the reporting time reduces to 7 days. The language that provides for transitioning from 30 day reporting to 7 day reporting creates deadlines that exceed 30 days for transactions that occur between the 72nd and 66th day before an election. This change ensures that all transactions for candidate and political committees and independent expenditure filers are due within 30 days.

Section 3 campaign finance transactions for treasurers of initiative, referendum or recall petition committees are normally reported within a maximum of 30 days after receiving the contributions or making an expenditure. Currently, there is an anomaly whereby transactions filed on several, specific days during each election cycle are due up to 35 days later. This change ensures that all transactions are due within a maximum of 30 days.

Section 4 provides that nonaffiliated electors who wish to request a party ballot for a major political party who has opened their primary election, must complete, sign and submit an application either electronically, in person or by mail.

Section 5 allows candidate committees to provide the name of the committee's financial institution within one business day of filing their initial statement of organization. This solves a "chicken and egg" problem where candidates often can't open a bank account without being a candidate but can't be a candidate without having a bank account. An amendment to this section is needed to make this change for political committees and chief petitioners in addition to candidates.

Section 6 provides that if a district candidate has died, withdrawn or becomes disqualified the candidates name will not be printed on the ballot or must be removed from the ballot before ballots are delivered. An amendment to this section is needed to clarify the language so it achieves its desired purpose. We suggest deleting the current language. The intent of this section was to have district candidates checked to make

sure they meet the qualifications for office before they are placed on the ballot, as is the case for other candidates. Currently no one checks whether many district candidates are qualified for office before they are placed on the ballot. There are district candidates that will not qualify for office who get printed on the ballot, elected, and then later are found to not qualify. This then causes a vacancy in the office, adding additional costs for the process of filling the vacancy. This also undermines the democratic process by depriving voters of the opportunity to vote for eligible candidates. This is what we were trying to change in this section, not have ballots erased as the current wording requires. We would be glad to assist with amendments to this section.

Sections 7 and 8 are technical and clarifying clean up language. Some sections say nominating election (ORS 249.088, 091, 205) and others say primary election. Looking to make them the same.

Section 9 extends deadlines for write-in candidates to receive, accept and file the write-in acceptance form with the filing officer. Currently, this process occurs prior to certification.

Section 10 extends the deadline for district elections authority to determine the results of the election from the 40th day after the election to the 45th day.

Section 11 removes requirement that the Secretary shall provide a random ordering of the alphabet if only one candidate is listed on the ballot such as; in the event of a recall election.

Section 12 & 13 clarifying clean up language.

Section 14 provides that an independent expenditure must be reported if the aggregated expenditure(s) totals are more than $750 to make it consistent with other sections.

Section 15 provides for the implementation of these changes.