

We Need Campaign Finance Reform in Oregon

Big money weakens our democratic institutions, undermines confidence in government, and excludes the vast majority of citizens from seeking public office. Strong campaign finance laws are critical to protect the integrity of local elections — our elections.

Oregon is one of only 5 states with no limits on political contributions. Candidates and public officials have become unduly beholden to the special interests able to contribute big money. Campaign spending in Oregon has skyrocketed by a factor of 10 (1,000%) since 1996.

The State Integrity Investigation of the Center for Public Integrity in November 2015 graded Oregon an overall "F" in systems to avoid government corruption. **Oregon ranked 2nd worst of the 50 states in control of "Political Financing," beating only Mississippi.**

Worst States in Political Finance Regulation (2015)

- 45. North Dakota
- 46. Virginia
- 47. Indiana
- 48. Wyoming
- 49. Oregon
- 50. Mississippi



Conversely, the Koch Brothers-funded so-called "Institute for Free Speech" in March 2018 ranked Oregon #1 in America for having the "best" system of campaign finance regulation -- no limits on contributions at all. **The corporations and billionaires really like Oregon's system of no limits, because they can use their money to buy politicians.**

The 2018 candidates for Governor spent over \$40 million, more than doubling the previous record. One person, Phil Knight, gave \$3.45 million to Knute Buehler, the Republican candidate. Both major campaigns raised 70% of their funds from contributions of \$10,000 or more, only 10% from contributions of under \$500, and only 15% from contributions of under \$1,000. THE OREGONIAN reported that candidates for the Oregon Legislature raise and spend more in their campaigns, per capita, than in any other state, except New Jersey. The average spent in 2014 by the top 10 Oregon Senate candidates rose to \$750,000 each. The average spent in 2016 by the top 10 Oregon House candidates rose to \$825,000 each. Some candidates spent over \$1 million, over \$80 per vote received. The bigger spending candidate won 94% of the time (2014 - 2016).

The Corporate Reform Coalition (75 progressive organizations) in 2012 concluded that only 6 states have worse systems for disclosing independent expenditures. They graded Oregon an "F" in disclosure, while Washington earned an "A." Now, 10 states require that political ads identify their top funders, including California and Washington. For 93 years, Oregon had a law requiring that political ads at least identify their sources, but that law was repealed in 2001 by a Republican-majority Legislature and a Democratic Governor.

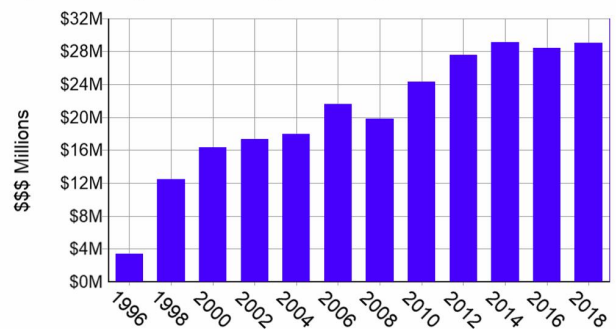
When Chevron, Inc. attempted to take over the government of the California city of Richmond (population 110,000) by running its hand-picked candidates for the mayorship and city council positions in 2014 (and spending over \$3 million to fund their campaigns), all of Chevron's candidates lost--because of the California law that required its ads and brochures and billboards to say: "Major Funder: Chevron, Inc." All their opponents won, despite being outspent by about 50 to one. Voters need this information to judge the credibility of political ads.

National Study of Anti-Corruption (Nov. 2015) Grades Oregon: F

Public Access to Information	F
Political Financing	F
Executive Accountability	F
Legislative Accountability	D-
Procurement	F
Lobbying Disclosure	F
Ethics Enforcement Agencies	F



Spending on Oregon Legislature Races



Initiative Petition No. 1 (2020) would amend the Oregon Constitution to ensure that the people can adopt and enforce limits on campaign contributions and require all political ads to identify their largest funders. We need to collect 149,000 valid signatures by July 3, 2020, to get this on the Oregon statewide ballot. To get involved, contact us at info@honest-elections.com or 503-427-8771.