



KATE BROWN  
Governor

March 20, 2019

To the Senate Committee on Campaign Finance,

Campaign finance reform in Oregon is the first pillar of my Defending Democracy Agenda. Without it, spending in Oregon campaigns will continue to rise, vesting more and more power to a wealthy few rather than a broad electorate.

Over the years we have been unable to have a meaningful conversation about what limits should look like in our state due to the way our constitution has been interpreted. In order to change this we must make clear in our constitution that in Oregon, we can put contribution limits in place to help protect our democratic process. Elections should be more competitive and inclusive, as well as reduce barriers to participation – for candidates and donors alike. I am completely committed to this pursuit.

First and foremost, we need a legally sound constitutional amendment that reflects the will of the Oregon people. To be most effective, it is my belief that the regulation of elections and campaigns should reside in the Article II, Section 8 of the Constitution. Article II, Section 8 regulates suffrage and is a natural home to campaign and election regulations.

A constitutional amendment must make it clear to voters and the courts, that campaign contributions may be regulated and that the greatest transparency in campaigns is permissible. Furthermore, we should ensure Oregon's ability to regulate money in politics is no more restrictive than the federal constitution permits. At its core, a constitutional amendment must expand, in every lawful way, Oregon's ability to regulate our electoral process.

My goal is to see lasting constitutional authority to regulate campaign finance in Oregon and to see reasonable limits put in place. These are not easy hills to climb, but the work of members in both chambers of our legislature has started us up the path and is commendable.

I look forward to continuing to work with you individually and as committees to get this done.

Sincerely,

Governor Kate Brown

