
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon

May 13, 2021

Chair Smith Warner, Vice-Chairs Drazan and Holvey, and Members of the House Committee on Rules,

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon (PPAO) has made access to democracy a top priority. Reproductive freedom and health care are often attacked at the ballot box and unfairly politicized, so we advocate for policies that ensure everyone can engage in our democratic process to defend their bodily autonomy and access to health care. We are writing in support of HB 2680 and the -1 amendments.

Civic participation is the bedrock of any democracy. Planned Parenthood PAC of Oregon works hard every election cycle to engage volunteers and supporters in voter education and turnout. These grassroots efforts and mobilization of collective people power help to elect leaders who are representative of our communities; who will defend and expand access to sexual and reproductive health care; and who will work hard to overturn and remedy racist and discriminatory public policies that impact an individual's ability to be healthy and to thrive.

We value policies that increase the ability for people of color, the LGBTQ+ community, immigrants, and middle and working-class Oregonians to participate in our democracy and that create accountability among lawmakers to the public. Just as with health care access, criminal justice reform, or housing, as we think about enacting policies related to campaign finance and elections, we must account for what exclusion has looked like and ensure that the impacts of future policy meet the needs of the people, not big corporations or well-funded super PACs that seek to buy elections or candidates.

We feel that the -1 amendments to HB 2680 balance the need to limit the influence of big money in politics and bring more transparency and accountability to elections while also making sure that we can build a more inclusive democracy that provides Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) and working Oregonians with a greater voice. The -1 amendments are the result of a process that engaged many stakeholders—including organizations who work on the behalf of communities that have been historically and purposefully excluded from the institutions and tables making the decisions that impact their lives. Many small and emerging 501c4 organizations, particularly those led by people of color, are engaged in work every day to advocate on the behalf of the issues impacting marginalized communities and to do civic engagement work to get more of those individuals involved in our democracy.

We thank Representative Rayfield and his staff for reaching out to these BIPOC-led and community-based 501c4 organizations to inform these discussions, and for the thoughtful approach they are taking to ensure that we do not undermine the work these groups are doing to build a more representative democracy. Campaign finance reform is a healthy and necessary next step for democracy, but we cannot unintentionally cut out Oregonians who have been the least represented in government. To that end, PPAO supports the following elements of the -1 amendments:

- **Staff in-kind support**, which is a critical way that these organizations can fully participate in elections. Staff are often a reflection of, and grown from, a volunteer base of community members, so the staff in-kind support that is utilized for direct voter outreach and engagement is an essential component in engaging voters in democracy and a great tool for bringing more diverse voices into the political sphere. The -1 amendments preserve the ability for groups to be able to provide in-kind staff support while also placing a \$50,000 limit on in-kind staff time.
- **The definition of a membership organization** which removes barriers to participation and promotes volunteerism with organizations to build stronger communities. A lot of organizations work in communities that may not have a lot of money to contribute, but whose members dedicate and donate their time, which is

just as valuable if not more valuable. At times members of the public would rather work with and trust an organization over a politician. The organizational membership included in the -1 allows for members of the public to do both.

- **The creation of small donor PACs** which empowers the collective efforts of working people and allows their small dollar contributions to have a meaningful impact in races.
- **The Small Donor 6-1 Match Program** because small donor public financing is one of the most powerful, proven solutions available to counter the overwhelming influence of wealth on our political process following the U.S. Supreme Court's Citizens United decision. Small donor PACs combined with a matching public financing option would be one of the most powerful ways to expand grassroots organizing and uplift the voices of everyday Oregonians to influence political change.

As we get big money out of politics, we also need to acknowledge that we cannot set limits so low that candidates are unable to raise enough resources to compensate campaign staff with fair, living wages and health benefits. Furthermore, a lack of realistic limits and meaningful transparency measures would increase the reliance and dependence on independent expenditure campaigns. Independent expenditure campaigns separate candidates from owning their campaign messages, and too often, independent expenditure campaigns lead to the spread of not only negative and hostile campaigning –but also the spread of false and misleading information in our communities.

PPAO opposes the -2 amendments, which does not include small donor PACs and unduly benefits corporations and wealthy donors over working Oregonians. The -2s do not make our election system more equitable or diverse.

We respectfully urge the committee's support of HB 2680 and the -1 amendments. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon