

10 February 2022

To: Senate Committee on Rules

Chair Senator Wagner, Vice-Chair Senator Knopp and members of the Committee.

Letter in Opposition to Senate Bill 1561

Unsurprisingly, in politics, as in many aspects of life in general, money and influence are bound up with each other. While it's certainly true that campaign funding is not always the deciding factor of who wins an election, the fact remains that access to large amounts of cash helps quite a bit.

Private campaign contributions—even those that directly influence what a legislator does—are not good or bad in themselves. It all depends on whether the special interest being advanced accords with the public interest; a murky area in itself.

The typical campaign finance regulations involve placing limits on individual contributions. Superficially, this kind of makes sense. Who wants big money in politics? It seems so simple, but if history and politics-in-general has taught us anything, it's that regulations marketed as silver bullets wind up being disappointments. They often simply create more problems, e.g., this measure “repeals the 2006 Ballot Measure 47”. How long until we're correcting SB 1561 somewhere down the road?

The real question the electorate should be asking is, who benefits? Most legislation ostensibly directed at campaign finance can also end up as regulations that incumbents draft to protect their electoral interests. Talk about working for the public interest aside, politicians still work to preserve their interests and keep outsiders from unseating them.

More campaign finance regulations are not going to fix any problem.

Human nature can not be regulated.

Senate Bill 1561 is not a good idea.

Sincerely,



Richard Wisner

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