



To: Senator Wagner, Chair
Senator Girod, Vice-Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Rules
From: Lindsey Scholten, Oregon League of Conservation Voters
Date: February 10, 2022

Chair Wagner, Vice-Chair Girod, and members of the Committee:

For the record my name is Lindsey Scholten and I am the deputy director for the Oregon League of Conservation Voters. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on SB 1561.

The Oregon League of Conservation Voters or “OLCV” is a nonpartisan organization with about 20,000 members across the state. For 50 years, OLCV has worked to ensure our elected leaders and our state’s policies represent and reflect the strong environmental values held by the people of Oregon. A central part of our work is to educate and mobilize voters on environmental issues. Every election cycle, we engage our members to be active participants in our democracy, and to help elect leaders who share their environmental values.

OLCV strongly supports campaign finance reform with racial justice and equity centered. We support responsible contribution limits and appreciate the intent of SB 1561. However, we believe SB 1561 misses the mark on the most important goal – creating a more inclusive democracy. Community-based organizations and other grassroots organizations are on the ground right now working to remove historical barriers to civic participation, in particular for Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC). We should be supporting emerging grassroots organization that are doing this important work, but I fear SB 1561 will instead very likely hinder and stifle their work.

Crafting campaign finance reform for Oregon is by no means an easy undertaking. OLCV is grateful to all the legislators, community members, and organizations who have been engaging on this important topic. OLCV is committed to continuing the challenging but important work of crafting campaign finance reform that will, first and foremost, center equity and racial justice as well as better ensure politicians are accountable to the voters, not large corporations or wealthy mega-donors. If we only do the latter but neglect to center communities historically marginalized and systematically left out of power, we will have not only missed an important opportunity but also reinforced systemic racism.

OLCV is hopeful that we can work together on campaign finance reform that truly helps create a more inclusive democracy. While SB 1561 is not the right solution, we look forward to working with you to develop and advocate for a solution that gets this important issue right.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to submit testimony on this critical issue.

Lindsey Scholten
Deputy Director
Oregon League of Conservation Voters