

To: House Rules Committee
From: Kate Titus, Common Cause Oregon
Re: Campaign Finance (HB 2024)
Date: February 23, 2024

Common Cause

Common Cause is a nonpartisan organization that works for open, honest, accountable government. We are 1.5 million Americans – including tens of thousands of Oregonians – working together to realize the unfinished promise of democracy.

On the Draft Amendment

Common Cause Oregon appreciates the effort among all parties to advance campaign finance reform. Having worked deeply on this issue for many years, we get that it's hard. Unfortunately, the current proposal does not serve the goals we support.

What's needed:

- **Diversify participation** – of those who can afford to engage and run for office themselves – so that candidates are representative of and accountable to all.
- **Encourage grassroots engagement** – so all communities are supported to participate in the democratic process, leading to more fully reflective government.
- **Prevent the biggest spenders from outsized influence** – so that all voices matter, regardless of their ability to write huge checks.
- **Make lawmakers accountable to voters & communities** – not to the donors making the biggest donations to their campaigns.
- **Curb corruption** – so that public service serves the public.

What this proposal does instead:

- **Supercharges the biggest corporations and entities** – allowing them to spend vastly more than everyone else, dominating the new political landscape.
- **Limits smaller grassroots efforts and everyday Oregonians** – leaving them even less powerful than they are now, compared with the super-spenders.
- **Preserves the power of the very biggest spenders** – ultimately leaving the status quo intact.

We would love to see the legislature pass **meaningful campaign finance reform** – including **limits** that prevent big money from any source from dominating our elections and politics, **transparency** that lets voters know the true original sources of funds spent to persuade us, and **public matching funds** that make even the smallest contributions matter, ensuring candidates can raise enough to run competitive campaigns without big money backing.

We strongly urge you to either fix or scrap this proposal.