



8/23/2024

Chair Fahey and members of the Committee,

We are writing on behalf of the State Council of the Independent Party of Oregon (IPO), which represents more than 140,000 members statewide. Rooting out the corrupting influence of money in Oregon politics has been a core issue for IPO for nearly two decades.

In 2022, IPO worked to help elect 32 cross-nominated candidates to this body, in part based on pledges by those candidates to support meaningful campaign finance reform. We engaged in significant outreach to IPO members, non-affiliated voters, and independent-minded voters in both major parties in support of our nominees specifically on this issue and have built a significant amount of public support for candidates based on the importance of reducing undue influence over government and our legislative process.

We appreciate the good faith efforts of the leaders involved in working on a last minute attempt to develop meaningful campaign finance reform for Oregon. However, we are dismayed that the end result of these efforts does not reflect the inclusion of the groups that have done the most work to bring this issue to voters.

Instead, this language appears to privilege the input and the interests of powerful corporations, lobbying groups and the political machines that have contributed significantly to the dysfunction of our political system and to our current political polarization. It is telling that at the time of this writing, the only organization to offer written public support for this proposal is Oregon Business and Industries, a longtime opponent of contribution limits, that represents Oregon's largest corporations and the interests of Oregon's wealthiest political donors.

This is unsurprising. The limits in the legislation contain numerous loopholes and range from \$900,000 in in-kind donations and from \$6,600 to \$66,000 in contributions per election year. Although these limits may seem significant to organizations accustomed to shifting hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars in individual transactions, they far exceed what the average Oregonian is capable of contributing to political causes.

Instead of a last minute proposal with high contribution limits, significant loopholes, and bundling mechanisms that advantage specific special interests and allow for many times those limits to funnel down to candidates, we instead encourage a framework that more closely reflects policies currently going to the ballot that have been drafted over a period of years by experts

with feedback from non-partisan good government groups like Common Cause, League of Women Voters, our party's leadership and others.

After nearly 100 years of failing to act, the Oregon legislature is prepared to take action now that reformers have 80,000 signatures turned in and are ready to make the ballot. And what groups are backing this bill? The very same interests whose power voters would like to see curtailed. No thanks.

We urge a "no vote" on this legislation unless dramatic changes are made to strengthen it.

Sincerely,

Linda Willams  
IPO Co-Chair

Andrew Kaza  
IPO Co-Chair