



# CONSOLIDATED OREGON INDIVISIBLE NETWORK

<https://www.coinoregon.org/>

COINLeadership@gmail.com

**To:** House Committee on Rules  
**From:** William Vollmer, on behalf of the Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network (COIN)  
**Re:** HB 4024-5, Campaign Finance Reform  
**Date:** March 2, 2024

The Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network (COIN) is an affiliation of grassroots organizations throughout the state that promotes progressive causes and legislation. The COIN coalition supports meaningful campaign finance reform and has previously endorsed HB 3343, dealing with contribution limits, and the Small Donor Bill, HB 2921, in previous legislative sessions. At present we are a strong supporter of Initiative Petition 9, for which supporters are currently gathering signatures to get it on the November ballot. IP 9 was developed by a coalition of good government groups including Honest Elections Oregon, League of Women Voters of Oregon, OSPIRG, Common Cause, Alliance for Democracy, Independent Party of Oregon, Pacific Green Party, Oregon Progressive Party, and COIN.

We submitted testimony last week against HB 4024-3 and are now submitting testimony against this latest iteration, HB 4024-5. According to Dan Meek of Honest Elections Oregon, the -5 amendment has lowered a few contribution limits from the -3 amendment, but it has also added new loopholes. It is telling that this latest version was filed at 4:55PM on Friday in advance of an 8:00AM Monday hearing. How disrespectful to the voters given the importance of this issue.

We realize that corporate and union interests are both behind this bill. No wonder, as they both benefit hugely from our current system with no contribution limits and little or no real disclosure. They like the status quo and would prefer to not see it changed. And of course the current Legislature are the beneficiaries of that system. The simple reality, as you must be aware, is that the movement to pass this legislation is spurred by the fear that real campaign finance reform, in the form of IP 9, will be passed by the voters this Fall.

We close this testimony by paraphrasing from a recent Commentary by Tim Nesbitt in the Oregon [Capital Chronicle \(Feb 29, 2024\)](#) citing the long history of voter attempts to enact real campaign finance reform and how they have been blocked at every turn:

*For 30 years Oregon voters have been supporting ballot initiatives to limit the role of big money in Oregon elections. In 1994, with a 72% yes vote, Oregonians approved Ballot Measure 9 to limit contributions to candidates and campaign spending. Three years later the Oregon Supreme Court gutted the measure and ushered in our current system with no contribution limits.*

*In 2006 the good government groups behind IP 9 took two measures to the voters. Ballot Measure 46 would have amended the state constitution to authorize campaign contribution and spending limits, while Ballot Measure 47 sought to enact specific limits into law. Although voters approved the contribution limits in BM 47, the constitutional*

*amendment failed to pass and the Secretary of State declared Ballot Measure 47 to be unenforceable.*

*Then in 2020 the Oregon Supreme Court reversed its earlier decision in response to yet another campaign finance measure approved by the voters in Multnomah County, but the Secretary of State still chose not to enact the contribution limits of BM 47. Later that year voters approved (this time with 78% in favor) Ballot Measure 107, amending the Oregon Constitution to allow the enactment of campaign contribution and spending limits at the state and local level. In the two full sessions and one short session since then, the Legislature failed to pass any campaign finance reform.*

Now, in 2024, the good government groups appear poised to get IP 9, the culmination of years of planning with local and national experts on campaign finance reform, on the ballot for November. HB 4024-5 would appear to be just the latest effort to stymie the will of the voters.

If the Rules Committee is truly interested in passing the type of real, meaningful campaign finance reform that Oregonians clearly want to see enacted, why not just pass IP 9?