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COINLeadership@gmail.com

To: Members of Oregon Legislature
From: William Vollmer (on behalf of Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network – COIN)
Re: Testimony in opposition to HB 4018-6
Date: February 10, 2026

I am a Portland resident writing to you on behalf of the Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network (COIN) to strongly oppose the -6 amendment to HB 4018.

COIN is a coalition of over 75 local Indivisible groups throughout Oregon that cooperate and amplify their joint efforts to advance important federal and state legislation and to engage with elected officials to promote progressive causes for the benefit of all Oregonians. I help lead COIN's efforts to track Campaign Finance Reform (CFR) legislation and represent COIN on the coalition led by Honest Elections Oregon (HEO) that has long sought to promote good CFR in Oregon. This coalition contains some of the State's leading experts on campaign finance laws and also works closely with national experts on CFR. It has been the prime mover behind much of the CFR that has occurred in Oregon over the last 20 years.

CFR legislation (HB 4024) was passed with much fanfare during the 2024 short session. While everyone recognized that it needed a variety of technical fixes, little real progress has been made on implementing them. This despite the fact that HEO identified the necessary technical fixes as early as June 2024; every iteration of HB 4024 put forward by the SoS has essentially ignored HEO's input. It would appear that the SoS, and indeed much of the Legislature, isn't really interested in true CFR. During the 2025 legislative session the Legislature attempted to pass a bill that would have significantly delayed implementation of HB 4024, only to back down after a huge public outcry against this effort.

The SoS's office is now under the gun since HB4024's campaign contribution limits are supposed to take effect January 1, 2027. It recently claimed it now needs an additional \$25 million to implement HB 4024 on time. As detailed below in Attachment 1 we challenge this figure.

The -6 amendment to HB 4018 appears to be the end result of the SoS's efforts to address the technical fixes and to deal with the challenges in implementing some of them in a timely and efficient manner. In oral testimony in support of this amendment, the Committee was told that most of the changes were "silent form" changes intended merely to make the law easier to read and understand, that it addresses all of the needed technical fixes, and that nothing substantive has really changed. The Committee was also told how inclusive the process of arriving at this amendment was.

We beg to differ! For starters, this 84-page amendment was introduced basically as a gut-and-stuff amendment to what was an innocuous one-sentence bill directing the SoS to study elections. It was also posted after close of business Feb 9, less than 15 hours before the scheduled 8 am on the 10th. Finally, and perhaps most tellingly, it was developed without any involvement of the campaign finance reform community, including Honest Elections Oregon, League of Women Voters of Oregon, Common

Cause, the Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network (COIN), Campaign Legal Center, the Independent Party of Oregon, Oregon Progressive Party, and Pacific Green Party, among others. That is neither a transparent nor an inclusive process.

Dan Meek from HEO, in the very limited time he had to review the amendment, has already identified nine significant, substantive changes and expects he may find more. He concludes in his written testimony that this amendment comes **“very close to repealing the contribution limits and disclosure requirements”** that were initially part of HB 4024. I won’t repeat them here, but refer the Committee to Mr. Meek’s testimony.

In conclusion, COIN recognizes that the Legislature faces substantial pressure from various special interest groups who do not wish to see HB4024 implemented, or if it is enacted that it includes provisions favoring their particular interests. Indeed, we support many of the organizations that gave testimony in favor of this amendment. However, I would remind the Committee that the voters of Oregon have repeatedly, and by overwhelming majorities, voted for real, effective campaign finance reform. Such reform doesn’t selectively favor one class of donors over another. Furthermore, such partisan provisions inevitably create loopholes that can be exploited by others. We’ve seen this time and again in other States. COIN therefore urges you to reject HB 4018-6 and to urge the SoS to work closely with Honest Elections Oregon to get HB4024 implemented on time.

Attachment 1

It seems highly likely that most of \$25million cited by the SoS are actually needed for a totally different project--the overhaul of the existing ORESTAR campaign finance reporting system. While COIN has no problems with such an overhaul, it is neither required by HB 4024 nor necessary for its implementation. Indeed, Multnomah County and the City of Portland have implemented their campaign contribution limits since 2020 by relying upon information from the existing ORESTAR system. It's possible that some minor tweaks to ORESTAR might be needed to fully implement HB4024, but the cost to make such changes should be modest and easy to implement within the timeframe specified in HB 4024.

Dan Meek from HEO has repeatedly asked the Secretary of State's office to break down the need for additional funds into its purposes:

- implementing the HB 4024 contribution limits
- implementing the HB 4024 disclosure requirements
- overhauling or replacing ORESTAR

To date he has not received that information. The Legislature should insist on receiving such a breakdown from the SoS.

The table below shows that States that already enforce campaign contribution limits spend far less on that function than the SoS's office claims it needs. Even California, with a population ten times larger than Oregon, spends only about \$19 million per year on implementation of both its campaign contribution limits, its extensive disclosure requirements, and its government ethics laws. Washington, whose campaign finance laws are top ranked for transparency and audit frequency, spends only \$7.2million and this covers: disclosure and reporting, public access to data, enforcement and compliance monitoring, training, and technology maintenance and improvements.

State	Primary Oversight Agency	Estimated Annual Budget	Notes
California	Fair Political Practices Commission	19,290,000	Robust enforcement; includes ethics violations.
New York	Public Campaign Finance Board	14,548,000	Includes administration of public matching funds.
Washington	Public Disclosure Commission	7,200,000	Top-ranked for transparency and audit frequency.
Connecticut	State Elections Enforcement Commission	4,200,000	Primarily dedicated to campaign finance.
Massachusetts	State Ethics Commission	3,634,000	Combined campaign and general public employee ethics.
Wisconsin	Ethics Commission	3,000,000	Combined ethics/campaign finance.
Minnesota	Campaign Finance & Public Disclosure	1,400,000	Budget primarily covers audits and legal staff.

The functions of the Washington Public Disclosure Commission include:

Campaign Finance Disclosure & Reporting

Managing electronic filing systems (ORCA and similar systems)

Receiving and processing tens of thousands of reports from candidates, committees, lobbyists, and others each year.

Public Access to Data

Hosting online searchable databases of campaign finance and lobbying information

Providing data exports and transparency tools.

Enforcement & Compliance Monitoring

Monitoring reports for compliance with disclosure laws

Investigating potential violations and enforcing RCW 42.17A (through hearings, orders, and penalties).

Training, Guidance & Outreach

Providing training to filers (candidates, political committees, lobbyists)

Issuing guidance documents and public education materials.

Technology Maintenance & Improvements

Maintaining and upgrading IT systems used for online reporting, data publication, and internal case tracking.

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