

February 12, 2026

Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Pham, and Members of the House Committee on Rules:

Portland Forward strongly opposes HB 4018-6. This amendment would weaken and delay the campaign finance reforms that Oregonians demanded and that the Legislature committed to in 2024.

Portland Forward is an intergenerational volunteer organization focused on advancing big ideas for our region's future. Few ideas are more foundational than strengthening our democracy. For years, we have spoken with voters across Oregon about the corrosive influence of big money in politics. At doorsteps, civic forums, and public hearings, we consistently hear the same message: Oregonians want meaningful limits on political money and real transparency about who is funding campaigns.

HB 4018-6 moves in the opposite direction.

Beyond renegeing on the 2024 legislative agreement that established Oregon's long-overdue campaign finance framework, HB 4018-6 makes substantive policy changes that benefit the largest political spenders while weakening enforcement and transparency. These are not mere "technical fixes." They are material changes to the structure and effectiveness of Oregon's new law.

Injects More Big Money into Oregon Politics

HB 4018-6 significantly increases the amount of money that can flow into our elections. It doubles some contribution limits for multicandidate political committees and allows candidates for local offices and school boards to accept in-kind contributions that could reach six figures and are not allowed by HB 4024.

These are not clarifications or clean-up edits. They are deliberate policy choices that expand the influence of wealthy donors and organized political interests. At a time when voters have clearly expressed concern about the outsized role of money in politics, this amendment would amplify it.

Undermines Meaningful Enforcement

The amendment also weakens enforcement in ways that are both legally problematic and practically unworkable.

For example, Section 13 alters the standard for determining when multiple organizations should be treated as a single entity for purposes of contribution limits. Under HB 4018-6, organizations would only be aggregated if they were "established for the sole purpose of evading the contribution limits."

This “sole purpose” standard is extraordinarily narrow and invites abuse. It would allow affiliated organizations to avoid aggregation so long as they can point to any additional stated purpose beyond evasion. In practice, organizations rarely document their true intent, making it nearly impossible for the Elections Division to prove that evasion was the exclusive motive.

States that impose contribution limits consistently confront the problem of proliferating affiliated entities designed to circumvent those limits. Weakening the aggregation standard before the law even takes effect effectively guts one of its core safeguards.

Reduces Transparency

HB 4024 established disclosure requirements based on total spending in an election cycle, ensuring that voters know the true sources of major political funding.

HB 4018-6 would create pathways for large spenders to distribute millions of dollars across multiple races without triggering meaningful disclosure of their original funding sources. That would allow major donors to influence elections while shielding their identities behind benign-sounding committee names.

Oregon voters have repeatedly made clear that they want to know who is paying for political advertising. HB 4024 delivered that transparency. HB 4018-6 weakens it.

Implementation Claims Should Not Be Used to Weaken Reform

We are also concerned about claims that implementation of HB 4024 requires \$25 million in new funding. That figure has been cited publicly, yet despite numerous requests, detailed cost breakdowns or implementation plans have not been made available to the public or to reform advocates.

Cost concerns should be addressed through transparent budgeting and oversight, not by weakening core provisions of the reform itself.

Oregonians waited decades for meaningful campaign finance reform. The Legislature negotiated and passed a bipartisan framework in 2024 to finally address the influence of big money in our elections.

HB 4018-6 would erode that progress before it even takes effect.

We urge you to reject this amendment and uphold the commitment made to Oregon voters.