

Submitter: Joan Horton
On Behalf Of: Alliance for Democracy Portland
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4018

Alliance for Democracy, Portland urges a NO vote on the -6 amendment to HB-4018.

Oregon voters have voted overwhelmingly to enact Campaign Finance Reform in this state. On 3 separate occasions Oregonians have approved campaign limits & donor transparency by margins of 70-89%. Alliance for Democracy opposes this amendment in its entirety. Its content and the way it was written and introduced is a betrayal of the Oregon voters.

We're part of the coalition known as Honest Elections Oregon (HEO), which has worked on campaign finance reform for several decades. HEO is the most expert group on CFR in Oregon. We have contacts with similar groups nationwide. But instead of availing themselves of our knowledge & expertise, the authors of this amendment cooked this up behind our backs. It isn't that they didn't inform us of this work. It's that they "looked us straight in the eye" and flat-out lied to us. But writing it in secret isn't the only problem with the process of creating this amendment. The second problem is how it was filed. This 84-page document was filed at 5:23pm on Monday, February 9th when a hearing had been scheduled for the next day at 8AM. And with a 2nd hearing and work session scheduled at 8AM on February 12th - only 48 hours later.

Clearly the authors of -6 didn't want the public, or HEO, to know about it until all the opportunities for public comment had passed. The -6 amendment is the result of the same sleazy, backroom double-dealings that voters everywhere despise.

Why it matters that HEO was not involved in writing this amendment:

On March 6, 2024 the Oregon Legislature voted to approve HB 4024, Oregon's current campaign finance reform law. This was after HEO had obtained over 100,000 signatures on IP 9, a petition to create real limits on campaign donations & to create true transparency as to the top donors. When it was clear that IP 9 was a viable petition, with significant citizen support, the opponents of CFR in Oregon started scheming to undermine it.

First they floated a 2nd CFR petition, with bogus limits, that was designed to confuse the public. In light of this, the Oregon Legislature proposed HB 4024, which required considerable rework to make it effective. HEO worked with the Legislature to create a bill that was relatively acceptable. HB 4024 still needed work, but it was passable.

In exchange for passing HB 4024, HEO agreed to end the IP 9 signature-gathering

campaign. In exchange we were assured that the issues with HB 4024 would be addressed once it was passed and that the Oregon legislature would work with us to achieve a good bill. An above-board deal was struck between HEO and the Oregon legislature. We officially ended the IP 9 petition drive.

But the legislature has not kept their end of the bargain. HEO has been in constant communication with the Secretary of State's office about the bill. Our existence is not a secret. Our availability to consult on improving HB 4024 is known to everyone involved in the project. Indeed, we have submitted a list of fixes to issues that we know exist in the bill. None of our fixes have been explored or taken seriously. Now we know why – over the past 2 years instead of working with us - as agreed upon - a backroom deal has been being hashed out between the opponents of CFR and the Oregon legislators who proposed this amendment. This amendment does nothing to fix issues in HB 4024. In fact it creates even bigger problems.

The technical problems with -6 will be spelled out for you by others. Our interest is in pointing out the dishonesty of the process by which it's in front of you today.

The -6 amendment is an effort by forces that don't want real CFR in Oregon and who are willing to lie to & betray the voters to retain their access to power. For these reasons alone, the amendment should be voted down.

Thank you,

Joan Horton
David e. Delk
Tom Thomas
Beth Kerwin
Ethan Scarl

Alliance for Democracy, Portland