

Submitter: Betsy Cunningham
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4018

Oppose HB 4018 – Protect Campaign Finance Reform

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair and Members of the Oregon House Committee on Rules,
I am writing to strongly urge you to oppose HB 4018.

While framed as a "study" or "technical fix," the recent 84-page amendment to HB 4018 seems to effectively gut the historic campaign finance reforms Oregonians fought for for a very long time. This bill does not clarify our laws—it creates loopholes that make contribution limits illusory and delays transparency for nearly a decade.

This means that the people of the state of Oregon will be denied what we voted for in 2020, when we authorized our state legislature to enact campaign finance reform and limit donations that tend to compromise fair elections. As you know, voters overwhelmingly supported that ballot measure because they wanted campaign finance limits and other reforms then. This support crossed party lines even in places like Douglas County, where I live.

I am specifically concerned by the following provisions in the bill:

Delaying Transparency: Postponing the implementation of the online donor-tracking system means we will go through multiple major election cycles without the transparency Oregonians want.

Increasing Contribution Limits: By changing "election cycle" to a "calendar year," more money from special interests can funnel to candidates, undermining the very spirit of reform.

Creating Unenforceable Standards: Requiring standard of "intent to evade" limits to crack down on shell organizations is a nearly impossible legal standard that may allow dark money groups to circumvent the law.

Lack of Transparent and Public Process: Such a massive overhaul of something that is so important to the voters of our state, with such short notice, is problematic at best. Certainly no way to handle democratic reforms so important to the citizens of Oregon.

Advocates who have been leading this fight for real campaign finance reform are rejecting this attempt to weaken the plan for our campaign finance system for good reason. You should too.

Please vote NO on HB 4018.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Betsy Cunningham
Roseburg, Oregon