

To: Members of the Senate Rules Committee, Joint Committee on Ways and Means, All Oregon Senators and Representatives
From: Jeff Hammarlund, retired professor of government
Re: Support for SB 1508 as a Better Alternative to HB 4018A
Date: March 2, 2026

Dear Chair Jama and the other members of the Senate Rules Committee, Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, the other members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means, and all members of the Oregon House and Senate,

I have been watching the Senate Rules Committee hearing this morning and the decision to not allow testimony to proceed on SB 1508 as a preferred alternative to HB 4018 A. I was able to hear Senator Golden's explanation and suggested amendment after the short recess. Frankly, I am still confused about what has been happening and what is and is not allowed to be said. However, I will proceed in good faith in the hope that my comments will be considered. I will also attempt to make them available to the members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means and, eventually, to all members of the Oregon legislature.

I have been shocked and dismayed by the tactics of so many legislators I know and respect as they seek to pass what is now HB 4018 A. As you surely must know, despite the unfounded claims by this bill's supporters, HB 4018 A seeks to virtually destroy meaningful campaign finance reforms contained in the HB 2024 compromise bill the legislature adopted in 2024. Despite numerous articles and editorials identifying and condemning this betrayal, leadership seems to be committed to advancing this bill despite the consequences. The result will be a significant decline in public trust and confidence in the state legislature during this perilous time when we most need your leadership and guidance.

I am sure the state's good government groups would prefer not to spend the time and effort to launch and (this time pass another ballot measure. However, the state legislature's leadership seems intent on giving them no other choice. You will recall that the good government groups were able to gather more than 100,000 signatures in 2024 before agreeing to hold off in exchange for the passage of the less strict compromise version, HB 4024 I have no doubt that the current effort to add a 95-page amendment to an innocuous study bill (a classic "gut and stuff" maneuver), with zero input from good government groups both local and national, will be seen by the majority of Oregon voters as the shocking betrayal of trust that it is. The end result will be a disillusioned and disgruntled public ready to support much stricter campaign reform laws than the compromise version the legislature adopted in 2024.

I urge both committees and the legislature as a whole to come to your senses and vote NO on HB 4018 A and to support SB 1508 with the amendment for a delay and time for careful reflection suggested by Senator Golden. Frankly, I would like to be able to say that I am still proud of the vast majority of the members of the Oregon legislature and their commitment to public service.

Respectfully,

Jeff Hammarlund, retired member of the faculty, Mark Hatfield School of Government and proud Oregonian