



To: House Rules Committee  
Re: Small Donor Elections  
Date: February 8, 2018

Chair Williamson and fellow committee members,

The Oregon Bus Project is a grassroots, nonpartisan organization committed to engaging new folks in democracy, building a great future, and empowering great people to lead it, right here in the great state of Oregon. That's why we are part of the Voice for All Oregon Coalition, a diverse grassroots coalition of organizations on the front lines of advancing the interests of Oregon residents including women, people of color, small businesses, and LGBTQ individuals. We are committed to bringing balance to our democracy by creating a small donor elections system in Oregon.

At the Bus Project, we focus on engaging young people in the democratic process by making it fun and accessible. We believe the current campaign finance system does the opposite – it drowns out the voices of the average Oregonians who can't afford to give large sums of money to candidates or campaigns they care about. As a result, most voters – especially Millennials – no longer believe that their elected officials are working for them. They believe that elected officials are skewing public policy in favor of wealthy special interests.

The Small Donor Elections bill address this growing voter concern by ensuring every voice matters in Oregon politics by making small donors a more powerful force in elections and reducing the need for candidates to rely on wealthy donors.

We believe that with a small donor program, candidates will be able to spend more time talking with ordinary people - working families, young people, low-income folks, and others historically left out of the process - empowering more people to be engaged in our elections, and ultimately strengthening participation in our democracy.

If we want to make progress on the most pressing issues facing our state - such as affordable housing and the increasing burden of student debt - we must ensure our democracy is working for everyone, not just special interests.

Thank you for your time. The Small Donor Elections bill is a popular proposal that would address deep voter concern that our government is not working for everyday people.

The Bus Project strongly supports the Small Donor Elections program, and urges you to pass House Bill 4076 swiftly this legislative session to recenter our communities in Oregon's democracy.

Sincerely,

Courtney Graham  
Interim Executive Director  
Oregon Bus Project