

HB 3397: Campaign finance reform. Testimony-House Rules Committee

As an elected official, and also as a voter in the State of Oregon, I am concerned about a gap in financial disclosure in Oregon's political campaigns. As it stands, not all individuals and organizations that run informational ads, post signs, send mailers, and so on before an election are required to report their spending.

To be an informed voter, it's useful to know the source of information they are receiving, or using. Voters expect that political campaign spending has been reported; they assume it, and think it all is. If an individual or an organization is spending more than \$500 sending informational handouts, posting signs, or buying ads within 60 days before an election, voters expect that this spending has been reported under existing campaign finance laws. But sometimes these communications are not reported, and no individual or organization is listed as the source.

Knowing where campaign related materials originate, or how they're funded, is vital to the democratic process. As Oregonians we pride ourselves on transparency and disclosure in our campaigns. We don't have limits on what candidates can spend, but everyone knows how much is being spent, who is spending it, and where the money is coming from. My constituents are surprised to hear that this is actually not always true in Oregon. Our civically engaged citizens and voters want to know, and deserve this transparency.

HB 3397 aims to close a loophole in Oregon's disclosure laws by requiring individuals and organizations that spend more than \$500 publishing information on candidates within 60 days before an election to report their spending. It ensures a level playing field. It uses existing law, and reporting mechanisms, to treat all campaign materials the same: you spend money campaigning, you report it.