

Fighting Big Money, Empowering People: An Oregon Agenda

As Oregonians, we share a strong tradition of independent government run of, by and for the people. We expect our government to serve us based on the consent of the governed, with voters, not money, driving decisions. We will not stand by and allow the corrosive influence of big money in politics and the corrupting force of partisan politics to go unchecked, drowning out the voice of the people and undermining confidence in government. We expect leadership that puts voters back at the center of our democracy.

Oregon lawmakers should commit to these five principles of democracy:

1. Everyone participates;
2. Everyone's voice is heard;
3. Everyone knows who is trying to influence our views and our representatives;
4. Everyone plays by fair, common-sense rules;
5. Everyone is held accountable, with enforceable penalties to deter bad behavior.

If elected, will you endorse, prioritize and work aggressively to:

LIMIT THE INFLUENCE OF BIG MONEY in Oregon politics, first by supporting a state constitutional amendment to authorize limits, then by setting an upper ceiling on how much a candidate can receive from a single contributor.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MAKE EVERYONE'S CONTRIBUTION MATTER by establishing a public financing system in Oregon that amplifies small campaign contributions while reducing the reliance on large contributions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ENSURE FULL TRANSPARENCY , supporting removal of state constitutional barriers to transparency, then strengthening laws that shine a light on secretive political giving, by requiring "paid for by" statements on campaign ads and full disclosure of pass-through donations so that voters can "follow the money."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PROTECT EVERYONE'S RIGHT TO VOTE , in a modern, efficient, accurate and convenient state voting system that encourages participation, and discourages voting disparities based on race, age, geography or other demographics. Specifically, this includes expanding on New Motor Voter and opposing policies that make voting or voter registration more difficult.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PREVENT GERRYMANDERING , that skews the relative voting strength of whole communities for partisan or incumbency advantage by putting Oregon's redistricting process in the hands of a nonpartisan citizen's commission and making the process fully transparent.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FIX THE FEDERAL LEVEL , calling for a federal constitutional amendment to restore the ability of Congress and the states to set reasonable limits on the raising and spending of money to influence elections, including distinguishing between corporations and real persons.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

YES NO

Common Cause Candidate Questionnaire 2016
Thomas M. Donohue Republican Candidate State Representative House District 10

Thank you for the opportunity to reply to a thought provoking questionnaire.

You've asked 6 questions on my opinion relating to campaign finance reform premised by asking "If elected, will you endorse, prioritize and work aggressively to:", followed by the questions.

I am the challenger for this House race. If elected, I would represent the central Oregon coastal counties of south Tillamook & Lincoln, as well as small parts of Benton, Polk & Yamhill on the eastern borders of this House District 10.

Although important, I couldn't prioritize these concepts, as HD 10 has serious problems that are more important to my constituency. However, I certainly endorse and would work hard toward seeing legislation pass to make campaign finance reform a real force in Oregon politics.

In reference to Question 1: Limit The Influence Of Big Money--

The dirty little secret in Oregon politics is that campaign donations toward state Senators and Representatives are **unlimited at this time under Oregon Revised Statutes and Administrative Rule**. Oregon sponsors the 6th or 7th most expensive Senate & House campaigns in the nation. This brings us to the major problem with transitioning to a new system.

Incumbents have a major advantage to start with just being incumbent; name recognition etc. Creating new legislation setting finance limits, would hamper a challenger to the point that few would even try because the incumbent has already built a huge war chest anticipating the rules change (in many cases, we're talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars).

Currently, the federal donation limit on national office is \$2700 per person or corporation. This would be a decent goal for state offices.

The following is a suggested legislative remedy.

To at least give a challenger a chance to compete during this transition, I would suggest a transition period of 4 (2 year) election cycles for the House of Representatives and 3 election cycles for the Senate.

It would work like this: in the House, the first election cycle limits would be \$25,000 to \$30,000 per individual or corporation, the second election cycle limits would be \$15,000 to \$20,000 per individual or corporation, the third cycle would be \$5,000 to \$8,000 per, and lastly, the final election cycle limit would be our goal of \$2700 per individual or corporation.

In the Senate, whose terms last 4 years, it would be similar but the limits would decrease faster. The first election cycle limits would be \$25,000 to \$30,000 per individual or corporation. The second cycle limits would be around \$8,000 to \$10,000 and the third cycle would be our goal of \$2,700.

This concept would still give the incumbent a major advantage for the first & possibly the second cycles but it would eventually get us to a reasonable limit.

In reference to Question 2: Make Everyone's Contribution Matter ...

I disagree with establishing a public campaign finance system. Public financing means quite simply, higher taxes.

Campaigns already cost tens of thousands, to hundreds of thousands of dollars. Each election cycle, there are 60 representative and 15 senate races in play. If every race was contested and basing costs at \$50,000 to \$100,000 each, the taxpayers would be on the hook for \$3.75 million to \$7.5 million each election cycle. That's ridiculous!

If a citizen, Political Action Committee (PAC) or corporation wants to participate in the election process by supporting an individual candidate, fine; but to force one to support all candidates is wrong. This type of system is just like forcing one to join a union and pay dues to work at a specific job even though you disagree with that union's policies. That's wrong too.

In reference to Question 3: Ensure Full Transparency....

I agree that transparency in finance and other partisan political activities is critical to Oregon's well being.

The millions of dollars wasted for Oregon's "Bridge To Nowhere" and the abortive "Obamacare" website are outrageous examples just to name these two.

Current federal law allows Political Action Committees (PACs) not to disclose individual contributors. I'm not sure if creating a state law forcing them to reveal contributors would conflict with existing federal laws relating to PACs, but my best guess is that it would. This question should probably be left to federal legislators and the courts. It would be a waste of time and money to pursue it at the state level.

Most Oregonians and the Republican Party, specifically, abhors the flagrant lack of transparency in state government activities in recent years. That has to change & I will work to make that happen.

A dynamic step in the right direction would be to create a bi-partisan Ethics Commission with power to censure, fine and in egregious cases, remove from office or position, legislators & state employees who cross over the line. A good make-up for this committee would be 2 members from each party in the House and 1 member from each party in the Senate, chaired by a Governor-appointed person with no vote.

In reference to Question 4: Protect Everyone's Right To Vote ...

Of course, every American and Oregon citizen has the right to vote. I sincerely urge everyone eligible to do so.

I disagree that the "Motor Voter" law is a good thing. This law should have gone to a vote of the people not put into force via legislative action. I agree that showing identification or validating one's eligibility to vote in Oregon is proper.

However, automatically registering one via one's driver's license encourages voter fraud. Allowing non-Oregon citizens to vote is unlawful and that is what appears to be happening. Also, considering the Department of Motor Vehicles has had notoriously faulty information technology problems in the last 15-20 years, forcing this new law on this agency is causing many more problems for them and questions our election system's credibility.

In reference to Question 5: Prevent Gerrymandering..

I highly agree with this premise.

Voting districts are by-in-large geographical. However, they are changed every 10 years after the national census is taken. This is necessary because people move about the country. The last reshuffling in Oregon basically maintained the incumbent status quo. This is not a good way to do business.

There was an effort the last time around that started to gain traction but then died off. This effort was to create a non-partisan commission of demographic experts to adjust district boundaries instead of it handled by partisans.

This seems like a fair idea. I could support it in principle.

In reference to Question 6: Fix The Federal Level ...

The federal Constitutional amendment process is difficult. It's supposed to be. I agree that limiting big money in politics, both at the state and federal level, is an admirable quest.

The US Supreme Court has already determined that campaign contributions are a form of free speech. Limiting free speech in any form goes against my grain.

However, being transparent as to where money comes from is fair. There are real-world consequences for that transparency. Maybe that's the way it should be. If you believe in principle, stand your ground and defend it.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to express my opinions.

Signed:

Date:

Printed Name: Thomas M Donohue

State/District: H District 10