



HB22-1060 - Contribution Limits School District Director Candidate

Thank you Chairman Kennedy, distinguished members of the committee, and Representative Sirota. My name is Holly Monkman, I reside in Boulder, and I'm a member of the League of Women Voters of Colorado. I am testifying in support of House Bill 1060.

The League of Women Voters has long advocated for methods of campaign finance that protect representative democracy from being distorted by big spending in election campaigns. Colorado has contribution limits on state & county office campaigns and it is now time for Colorado to "plug the hole" on this one.

I've reviewed the recorded testimony to this committee for similar bills in 2016 and 2020. Many past school board candidates testified about the uptick in the number of large donations and increases in campaign spending.

The League strongly supports House Bill 1060 and I ask you to please vote yes. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

10/28/21. The Colorado Sun looked at contributions of \$10,000 and more in school board contests statewide in 2017 and 2019. There were five individual contributions of \$10,000 to school board candidates in 2017 and 21 in 2019.

That compares with 26 such donations by individuals this year, a statistic that doesn't include donors who gave multiple times that added up to \$10,000 or more.

LWVUS Position:

In order to achieve the goals for campaign finance regulation, the League supports:

Public financing of elections, either voluntary or mandatory, in which candidates must abide by reasonable spending limits; enhanced enforcement of campaign finance laws that includes changes to ensure that regulatory agencies are properly funded, staffed, and structured to avoid partisan deadlock in the decision-making process; abolishing Super PACs and abolishing spending coordinated or directed by candidates (other than a candidate's own campaign committee); and restrictions on direct donations and bundling by lobbyists, which may include monetary limits as well as other regulations.

Until full public financing of elections is enacted, limits on election spending are needed in order to meet the League's goals for protecting democratic processes. Among the different entities that spend money to influence elections, the League supports the following comparative limits:

- Higher spending limits for political parties, genuinely nonpartisan voter registration and get- out-the-vote organizations and activities, and candidates spending money raised from contributors.
- Mid-level spending limits for individual citizens (including wealthy individuals), Political Action Committees (with funds contributed by individuals associated with the sponsoring organization, such as employees, stockholders, members, and volunteers), and candidates spending their own money.
- Lower spending limits for trade associations, labor unions and nonprofit organizations from their general treasury funds.
- Severely restricted spending by for-profit organizations spending from their corporate treasury funds.
- No limits on spending by bona fide newspapers, television, and other media, including the internet, except to address partisan abuse or use of the media to evade campaign finance regulations.

This position is applicable to all federal campaigns for public office – presidential and congressional, primaries, as well as general elections. It also may be applied to state and local campaigns.

In 2010, the League reacted swiftly and strongly to the U.S. Supreme Court's adverse decision in the *Citizens United* case, which allowed unlimited "independent" corporate spending in candidate elections. The League president testified before the relevant House committee on the key steps that can be taken to respond, focusing on the importance of including tighter disclosure requirements. The League continues to urge passage of the *DISCLOSE* Act to counter the Court's decision and ensure that corporate and union spending in elections is fully disclosed.

With the explosion of supposedly "independent" spending by outside groups in the years since *Citizens United*, the League is pushing for tougher rules on coordination, since much of the outside spending is not independent and instead is coordinated with candidate campaigns. In addition, the League continues to push for legislation to protect and reinvigorate the presidential public financing system and to institute congressional public financing as well. The League also is working to reform the dysfunctional Federal Election Commission (FEC), which has refused to enforce the law.