February 15, 2019

To: House Committee on Rules
   Representative Paul Holvey, Chair

Re: HB 2709 – Independent expenditures in coordination with candidates – Support

The League of Women Voters of Oregon (LWVOR) and nationally (LWVUS) have supported campaign finance reform of elections with their studies and advocacy positions since the 1970s.

This bill tightens the statutory rules on coordination of independent expenditures with candidate campaigns. It would close loopholes in current Oregon law that allow subtle coordination of independent expenditures with candidate campaigns. The new rules would be in line with federal campaign finance rules.

Implementing campaign contributions limits have historically caused independent expenditures to increase, which are often used for “hit pieces,” dark money, and foreign money during candidate campaigns. Candidates can lose control of their campaign messages if independent expenditures get out of control.

This may seem like a minor bill, but it is very important in the context of other bills on campaign contribution limits, small donor elections and tightening other campaign disclosures. All these improvements in Oregon campaign finance law will work together to improve the control and transparency of Oregon elections.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Norman Turrill
LWVOR President

Rebecca Gladstone
LWVOR Governance Coordinator