

Opponent Written Testimony on SB 177

March 3, 2025

Chairperson Thompson and Members of the Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to SB 177. While campaign finance regulations should be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain effective and fair, this bill raises serious concerns about the undue influence of money in politics, transparency, and the integrity of our electoral system.

SB 177 proposes to double the contribution limits for statewide and legislative candidates. This change disproportionately benefits **wealthy individuals and special interest groups**, allowing them to exert greater influence over elections. By contrast, everyday grass roots Kansans who may struggle to contribute even a fraction of these limits will see their voices further diminished in the political process.

The bill ties future contribution limits to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and mandates automatic increases every two years. This provision removes legislative oversight and public debate from future campaign finance increases, allowing limits to grow unchecked. Given the already significant role of money in elections, this automatic escalation could lead to ever-increasing disparities in political influence.

By removing limits on contributions to and from political party committees, SB 177 opens the door for unlimited transfers of money between entities. This creates potential loopholes that could allow individuals and special interests to circumvent contribution caps and funnel large sums of money into campaigns with little accountability. Kansas has long maintained reasonable safeguards to prevent excessive financial influence. This bill would dismantle those protections.

Public confidence in the electoral system is already fragile. Increasing contribution limits and removing key financial restrictions will only deepen voter skepticism about whether elected officials are accountable to the people or to the biggest donors. A democracy should ensure that all voices are heard, not just those with the financial means to contribute large sums.

Rather than expanding the role of money in Kansas politics, we should focus on reforms that increase transparency, empower small donors, and promote fairness in the electoral process. SB 177 moves in the wrong direction by prioritizing the interests of wealthy donors over the broader electorate. I urge this committee to reject the bill and instead pursue policies that strengthen, rather than weaken, our democracy.

Thank you,

Jaime Kissinger -Precinct Committeewomen 526