

## Opponent Testimony HB2054

To paraphrase George Orwell in his book Animal Farm, All men are equal, but some are more equal than others. All men have free speech, but some men's speech is more free than others.

I am not opposed to increasing contribution limits. I am opposed to removing aggregate limits for party committees and political committees, which in effect makes unlimited contributions, and I am opposed to unlimited expenditures as written in section (f). Unlimited contributions and unlimited expenditures create unlimited influence. That unlimited influence is reserved only for the few Kansans who have the financial capacity to make unlimited contributions.

How do the majority of Kansas citizens benefit from this legislation?

Power and influence in our republic's election process should be kept as local as possible. Individual constituents have the right to elect their legislators to represent them. Individual voters should have the most power and right to exercise free speech in this process. Voters are disenfranchised when their voices are drowned out by those with wealth and power. Legislators and fellow citizens have a moral duty to protect the most vulnerable. The exercise of a citizen's rights of free speech and voting should not be based on income.

In listening to the House floor discussion of this bill, I heard the carrier of the bill mention that removing the contribution limits would balance the effect of the US Supreme Court decisions regarding SuperPAC contributions and spending. I believe it would more likely be the doubling down of dominance by the same few citizens with great wealth.

My personal interest in this legislation began as I observed the tragic negative consequences of the Supreme Court's decision (Citizens United etc.) on elections and individual citizen's rights. On the issue of government funded school choice, Super PAC's are spending millions of dollars across multiple states to unseat legislators who were serving their constituents in their legislative decisions, but not serving the interest of billionaires in other states. They publicly promised legislators that if they didn't vote for government funding of school choice – they would lose their next primary. At a minimum, this has already occurred in Texas, Wyoming, Idaho, South Carolina and Tennessee, and it may have occurred in Kansas' most recent election as well. This clearly harms citizen's ability to choose the legislators who will actually represent all of their concerns, rather than representing the specific whims of the very wealthy few.

I believe that this legislation is moving in the wrong direction in removing certain contribution limits to party committees and political committees. At the federal level, contribution limits remain for party committees and political committees. Also, there is overwhelming bipartisan citizen disapproval 3-1 of the Supreme Court's decision in Citizens United and related cases. I believe that Kansas should join with the many other states who have called for the federal government to pass a constitutional amendment to overturn those decisions. (Public Citizen)

The preamble to our Constitution states that government should be of the people, by the people, and for the people. All people. Not just the ones with large incomes.

“Our democracy is at grave risk of becoming nothing more than an auction – one in which We the People will always be outbid.” (Public Citizen)

I deeply regret that I cannot attend the hearing in person. I look forward to communicating with individual committee members to listen to their perspective on this legislation that has such serious ramifications for the rights of our citizens.

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