



Interested Party Testimony: House Bill 1
Jen Miller, League of Women Voters of Ohio
May 29, 2024

Thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony today regarding House Bill 1. As the Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of Ohio (LWVO), I'm offering interested party testimony on behalf of our 3,500+ dues-paying members, who live in every state Senate District and nearly all Ohio House Districts.

The League of Women Voters of Ohio is a nonpartisan organization that was founded over one hundred years ago by leaders of the women's suffragist movement. We are an issue-focused, grassroots organization that believes voters must play a critical role in our democracy. As an organization, the League has fought for decades to combat the influences of money in politics.

The League of Women Voters of Ohio believes campaign finance policy should ensure transparency about the sources of money spent in support or opposition of a candidate or issue, as well as combat corruption and undue influence. The League supports current federal¹ and Ohio² statutes that prohibit such foreign influence. Given that these prohibitions already exist, Ohioans deserve clarity on what the proposed changes in HB 1 will achieve, and the only way to get there is through substantive, thorough debate by experts and the public.

While we stand ready to work with you on campaign finance reform, we urge you to do so through a deliberative process that invites input from a wide range of stakeholders. Fast-tracking legislation is likely to result in unintended consequences that could be easily avoided through robust collaboration.

By holding only one hearing with little to no opportunity for public debate, at a time when many stakeholders are on vacation, this body will be deprived of the diversity of Ohioans' perspectives that could help prevent unforeseen negative ramifications. Similarly, this rushed process could result in ineffective legislation that doesn't achieve what the Ohio General Assembly or general public want.

¹ <https://codes.findlaw.com/us/title-52-voting-and-elections/52-usc-sect-30121.html>

² <https://elc.ohio.gov/opinions-decisions/advisory-opinions/by-year/2021elc05>

The complex nature of campaign finance demands thoughtful, substantive policy actions, which should be crafted by stakeholders from diverse interests and communities. We are happy to work with you to explore and craft effective campaign finance reform policies, but real reform would require a longer timeline and a genuine commitment to dialogue. Please do not rush any campaign finance legislation.

You can contact me to discuss further at director@lwvohio.org or 614-469-1505.

Thank you.

The League of Women Voters of Ohio was formed in May 1920 out of Ohio's woman suffrage movement. The League is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League has 36 local Leagues across the Buckeye State.