

OUR VIEW

# Should Oregon have campaign finance limits?

Oregon is one of only a handful of states that does not have contribution limits for political campaigns. And because of an Oregon Supreme Court decision last week, it's pretty clear Oregon voters will not get a chance to vote this year on a series of proposals.

The court didn't block the campaign finance proposals per se. They can be reintroduced. The court decided to not step into a dispute between Oregon Secretary of State Shemia Fagan and the people backing three campaign finance initiative proposals.

Fagan said the proposals did not comply with the law because they did not meet requirements. She pointed out they did not quote the entire section of the law that they sought to change. Initiative backers argued other petitions for the ballot had failed to do that in the past. The Oregon Supreme Court declined to get involved, saying the backers could have given themselves adequate time to make the required changes if they had started their efforts sooner. But that ruling essentially means the backers have run out of time.

Campaign finance proposals will be back. Legislators will surely bring forth some proposals during the 2023 session. Supporters of initiative proposals will try again if the Legislature doesn't act, or even if it does.

The interesting question is what should the limits be? \$10 per person per campaign cycle? \$100? \$1,000? Should unions get to contribute what they want but business groups not? That was one idea that has been proposed in Oregon. And then there are those independent expenditures not directly tied to a candidate. How would Oregon corral those?

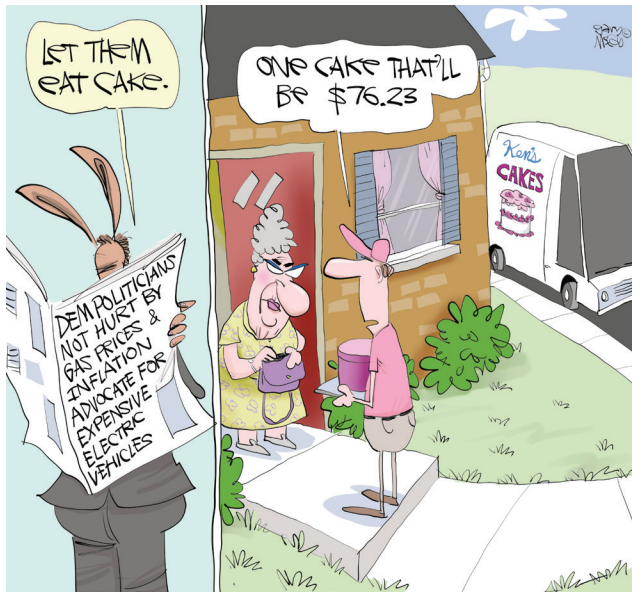
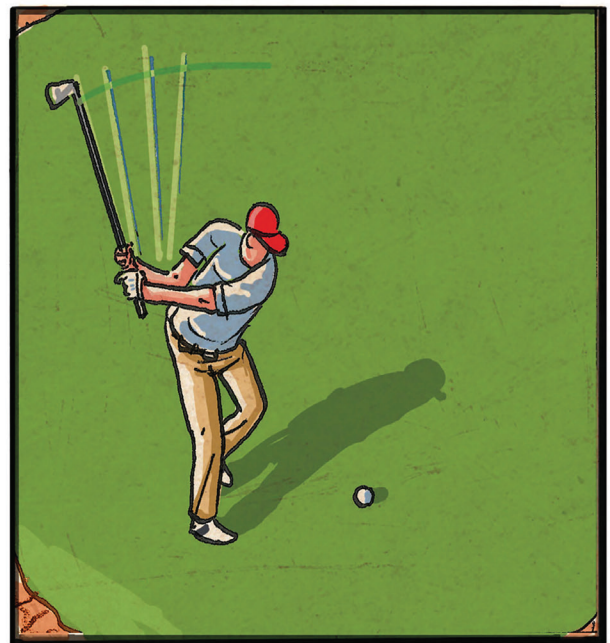
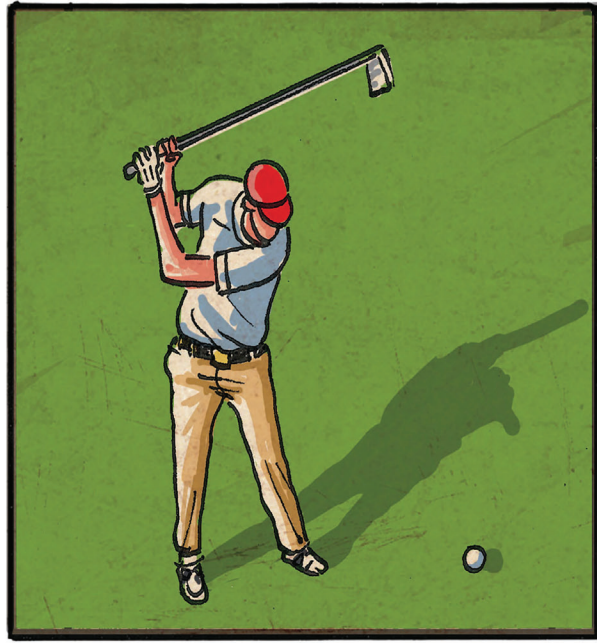
When you are looking at candidates for the May primary or in November, you can dive in yourself and look at where their money is coming from. Oregon already has strong laws requiring disclosure of contributions and spending.

Go here: [tinyurl.com/ORlookup](http://tinyurl.com/ORlookup). Look up your candidate. It's not necessarily the most user-friendly database, but we are sure you can figure it out. Where a candidate gets the money to run is another piece of useful information when thinking about how to vote.

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## Ag overtime bill is a win, not a victory



**BILL HANSELL**  
OTHER VIEWS

Before even the first gavel dropped on the 2022 legislative session, I knew that one of the most consequential bills of my legislative career would be considered.

HB 4002, or the agriculture overtime bill, was a divisive bill from the start and presented the Oregon Legislature with two options. One that would favor one side to the detriment of the rest of Oregon, especially the agricultural economy. This is what I called a win — a win for a select few at the cost of the rest of us. The other path included compromise, good-faith negotiation and a bill that would generate support from both parties. This is what I called a victory — a victory for all of Oregon.

I worked hard to get a victory, not just a win on agriculture overtime. But the final result was a win — a win for Willamette Valley liberal special interests who donate money to the majority Democrat's campaign funds.

It will make these groups feel

good about themselves, but it won't make Oregonians better off. HB 4002 will result in higher prices at the grocery store for working families, hours and pay capped for agricultural workers, and ultimately the shuttering of small family farms that fill my district.

Agriculture is a unique industry. During harvest seasons, it requires long hours to reap all the crops before frost or rains come. In ranching, there is even more nuance.

The bottom line is that farmers and rancher don't set their own prices, they have to take whatever price the markets are offering. The Democrats advanced an argument about ag overtime that essentially stated that a bushel of wheat harvested in the 41st hour is worth 50% more than one harvested at the 5th hour. Anyone who has grown up around farms knows that that is not true. And requiring farmers to pay their workers as such will soon result in a dwindling number of family farms to even employ these workers.

HB 4002 leveled all these unique distinctions in agriculture and mandated a one-size-fits-all "solution" that is really no solution at all. The "olive branches" that Democrats extended, the agricultural community never asked for. One example:

Under this new overtime pay mandate, family farms will now be able to apply for tax credits to ease the burden of the new overtime pay mandate. Now taxpayers will be subsidizing this new program. Farmers and ranchers never asked for that, but the majority decided that is what would be best for them.

I worked hard to come to a compromise. Simple adjustments for seasonality, flexible scheduling, and recognizing the difference between the kinds of agriculture would have helped. But the majority party rejected all these and charged ahead with what seemed to be a predetermined outcome, driven by their special interest groups.

I know how much Oregon's farmers and ranchers care about their employees and their families. HB 4002 will now force those farmers and ranchers to make difficult decisions about how much they can afford their employees to work. I grew up on these kinds of farms and I am afraid that under this policy, less and less of those farms will be around in the future.

*Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, is in his 10th year representing the seven counties that make up Senate District 29.*

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