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has consistently fought attempts at limiting campaign funding in the past. A phone message Street Roots left for VanNatta through a receptionist at his office was not returned by press time.

Oregon is one of only six states with zero limits on how much an individual or a political committee can contribute to a campaign.

"Oregon is such a disgrace," Meek said. "The Center for Public Integrity ranks Oregon 49th when it comes to controlling political financing. Oregon is ranked worse than any other state in America except Mississippi, and we barely beat Mississippi."

He said it will take, at a minimum, two years for the challenge to come before U.S. Supreme Court justices, but when it does, they will have an opportunity to use it to overturn Citizens United.

Meek said if this were to happen, laws limiting or banning independent expenditures that were already on the books would be resurrected – if they hadn't already been repealed – and it would open the door for new laws limiting independent expenditures to be introduced and implemented across the nation.

The U.S. Supreme Court's 5-4 majority, which ruled in favor of Citizens United, ended with the death of Justice Antonin Scalia.

"By the time this case gets there," Meek said, "unless Donald Trump wins, it should be at least 5-4 in favor of upholding the limits on independent expenditures, if not 6-3, because there are other folks of the Citizens United majority that may be gone by then."

Juan Carlos Ordóñez, a proponent of the measure, said going after Citizens United is not the only purpose of the ballot measure.

"We have local elections to protect, to make sure that we can put these limits on," he said. "State races are more expensive than races here in the county, but county races are getting quite expensive as well. In the last race for county chair, the winning candidate spent close to half a million dollars, which is a lot of money if someone wants to run for office. It really bars people who may have very good ideas and a message that resonates with people, but the money is basically prohibitive, unless you are well connected with wealthy individuals or with special interest."

Ordóñez said the measure would elevate the impact of small donors because if a political

committee only accepts donations of \$100 or less, then it would be considered a "small donor committee," and it would not be limited in the size of contributions it could make to a candidate's campaign. All other political committees would not be able to accept donations larger than \$500.

To date, no other city, county or state has introduced limits that would go against the Citizens United ruling.

"Someone somewhere has to do it if we are going to undo Citizens United," Ordóñez said. He helped get the measure on the ballot – but not in the usual way.

He's a member of the Multnomah County Charter Review Committee, which meets only every six years. This committee has the ability to put changes it would like to make to the county's charter up for a public vote without having to go the typical route of raising funds and gathering signatures.

"It was just an opportunity to get this on the ballot quickly," Meek said.

While both Democrats and Republicans typically vote against limits to campaign contributions, Meek said, the charter review committee had a way around that.

The 15 members of the committee are selected by members of the Oregon Legislature who have constituents who reside within the county, and here's the kicker – if two are appointed from the same Senate district, they must be from different political parties.

"In Multnomah County," Meek said, "that opens things up to the Greens and Progressive Party and Working Families Party, and creates this little group that is not beholden to the Democratic Party establishment."

Consumer advocate Ralph Nader plans to promote the measure when he's in Portland on Oct. 22 for a book tour stop. He will deliver a speech at a 7 p.m. fundraiser for the proposed charter amendment at First Unitarian Church of Portland.

The county measure differs from the proposal Portland City Commissioner Amanda Fritz introduced in September, which would not set any limits on campaign contributions but rather would offer qualified candidates a limited amount of matching funds, paid for by city taxpayers, and limit the amount those who receive matching funds could raise.

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the military industrial contracting system. It starts informing Congress, which doesn't want to know because they give them a blank check.

If they give them an audit, the U.S. Governmental Accountability Office, they can't get a blank check. Because it's right on their table, and they can't keep funding stuff for redundant, wasteful weapons, cost overrun, corruption, crime – you name it. There isn't a secretary of defense that's come out against running an audit, but they don't do anything about it because Lockheed and Grumman and Boeing – they don't want it. They won't say it publicly, but why would they want an audit when they are ripping off the taxpayer like crazy?

E.G.: *In the spirit of highlighting solutions, what can third-party hopefuls learn from the Green Party's experiences running a third-party presidential candidate that could help them be more successful in the future?*

R.N.: Well, they can learn that you don't run a presidential campaign with only 250 candidates locally out of 2.5 million seats. Board of education, city council – they've never been able to expand their local candidacies, which would support, obviously, a turnout for their presidential or senatorial candidates.

And it's partly because they're not recruiting energetic people. They can't recruit candidates; they can't recruit fundraisers; they can't recruit enough for a budget so that they have staff. So the lesson basically is: Start your own local party where you can knock on every door, where you can do what the Tea Party did to take over the Republican Party.

E.G.: *If people want to get involved in your movement, what should they do?*

R.N.: The most important thing for them to do is start Congress-watchdog groups – even with 10, 20, 30 people and a letterhead. You send it to senators, representatives. You say you're going to watchdog them, you're going to disseminate it throughout the state of Oregon, and we want to interview you and we want to sponsor town meetings.

You start building power from knowledge and the ability to disseminate it, and since most of the major changes in this country, at least structurally, have to go through Congress, it's a pretty good idea to focus on Congress, which Occupy Wall Street didn't do.

I'll leave you with a woeful comment by Eugene Deb, as he was winding up his career in 1920s. A reporter, like you, came up to him and said, "Mr. Debs, you've been fighting for the working people of this country since the 1880s. What's your biggest regret?" And he looked at the reporter, and he said, "My biggest regret? I'll tell you. My biggest regret is the American people, under their constitution, can have almost anything they want. But it doesn't seem that they want much of anything at all."

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