

Voter Owned Elections

Submitted by Pete Sorenson

About Pete:

Pete Sorenson leads the current effort to enact the Oregon Voter Owned Elections Act. He's a lifelong activist, working on dozens of campaigns. He's managed successful congressional and state senate campaigns, he's been elected to the Oregon state senate and has been elected three times to his current post, lane county commissioner. A bipartisan group of supporters is actively working on this effort.

About the Voter Owned Elections Proposal:

The Oregon Voter Owned Election Act is the most compelling path to restoring grass root elected representation that is responsive directly to Oregon voters. It allows registered voters to support and fund a candidate of their choice in a 2-step process, without reliance on patronage of big donors. This would free candidates who opt in from subscribing or otherwise be selected based on the basis of their loyalty to major donors. The qualifying process is to collect grass root tokens of support. A public fund would be established to fund qualifying candidates in primary and general elections, and would afford Oregon voters real alternatives to big money supported candidates.

This plan is non-partisan.

In the current system, qualified candidates are chosen by big money donors based on their allegiance to the donor's interest. Elected officials continue to have special obligations to their donors in order to get re-elected. This system has served big money donors extremely well, judging by the growing amount of money spent each election. In 2006, more than \$14 million in contributions was reported for the general election. Fully 92% of this sum is collected from contributors of \$251.00 or more, and 62% of the total is collected from contributors of \$2,501.00 or more. Contributors obviously get their money's worth, hence contributions continue to go up.

No matter what issue is more important to you, a Voter Owned sponsored elected official will be able to give your issue a fair and honest consideration.

3 Questions:

What is your current strategy for moving this idea forward? What is the general timeline?

The current strategy to advance the OREGON VOTER OWNED ELECTIONS ACT is to spend most of 2008 in educating the public, media and legislators about the proposal and obtain oversight hearings on the topic; 2009 would be spent in obtaining hearings and a positive vote; failing the 2009 session, our plan is to pursue the OREGON VOTER OWNED ELECTIONS ACT as a initiative measure.

Based on the list of prizes that are available for the winner of this contest, what prizes would you select and how would you put them to use?

I would pick 5 choices in order:

Gold Media Package: includes Mercury ad , Radio ad, Loaded Orygun and Blue Oregon exposure, as well as press by participating news media outlets, and email blasts by partner organizations.

One Rebooting Democracy sponsored Lobby Day

1/4 page Ad in the Portland Mercury

Inclusion in an Onward Oregon email Blast (60,000 member list)

1 appearance on the KPOJ morning show*

Voters in the Progressive Policy Battle Royale commit either money or volunteer time to whichever ideas they support. To what 501c3 organization will your monetary donations go and how will they be used? How will you be able to put volunteers to use and what kinds of tasks will they perform?

McKenzie River Gathering will be the 501c3 host for any monetary contributions. The contributions will be used to print materials and reimburse volunteer costs. Volunteer efforts will be devoted to doorbelling in appropriate legislative districts in order to inform key constituents of key legislators on the need for this legislation.