

# Democracy Reform Oregon



*Accessible politics,  
accountable government*

# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF PORTLAND



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## **Reformers Congratulate Candidates Seeking to Qualify for Voter-Owned Reform; Urges Non-Participating Candidates to Adopt Spending and Contribution Caps**

Democracy Reform Oregon and the League of Women Voters of Portland applaud the grassroots efforts of candidates seeking to qualify in Portland's Voter-Owned Elections reform program whose qualifying period ends today.

"It is great to see a diverse pool of potential Portland candidates seeking to use the Voter-Owned Elections option," said Carol Cushman, president of the League of Women Voters of Portland. "Their participation relies on demonstrating broad support from Portlanders. Thousand are now playing a significant role in determining who runs for city offices."

"City elections with publicly financed candidates will ensure vigorous discussion of issues of concern to typical Portlanders," said Janice Thompson, executive director of Democracy Reform Oregon. "This is in stark contrast to the last time Portlanders saw open seats on the Council in 2004 when fundraising set new records and 69 percent of the dollars donated to candidates came from only 7 percent of the contributors writing checks of \$1,000 or more."

Voter-Owned Elections is a proven reform program that increases competition, reduces special interest influence and expands opportunities for ordinary folks to meaningfully participate in candidate selection as well as allow candidates with community support rather than big money donors to run.

The constitutionality of Voter-Owned Elections is based on the reform program being voluntary, so it is not possible to mandate participation. In this legal environment, some candidates may decide to not run using the reform program. "We urge them to limit their campaign spending to the amount provided to Voter-Owned candidates and refuse large checks from private donors," said Cushman.

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*The League of Women Voters is a multi-issue organization whose mission is to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government and to influence public policy through education and advocacy.*

*Democracy Reform Oregon (DRO) is a non-partisan, not-for-profit group working to increase accountability and opportunities for participation in politics and governmental decision-making. DRO has been working on democracy reform issues since 1999 and was formerly the Money in Politics Research Action Project.*