

Editor
Akron Beacon Journal
sent via email
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To the editor,

The democratic litmus test in measuring any political campaign finance proposal is, one, whether it provides people without huge bank accounts more opportunities to be heard by political candidates, and, two whether it allows candidates without huge bank accounts a better chance to be elected.

On both counts, State Issue 3 is an improvement to current Ohio law. Current campaign finance laws, it should be remembered, reflects several horrific provisions passed by the lame-duck legislature last December in special session, including quadrupling campaign contribution limits from \$2500 to \$10,000 and legalizing direct corporate contributions for the first time in more than 90 years.

How exactly are the rights and interests of people without huge bank accounts better served by wealthy people able to contribute four times as much as before? Or by corporations given political rights to contribute in ways they before could not?

And what about candidates without huge bank accounts? I've not noticed a stampede of low or moderate income people since December declare their candidacy for statewide office confident that business corporations with new authority to politically invest or the wealthy able to invest \$10,000 per candidate per election will be knocking at their doors.

The assertion made by the Beacon Journal and other opponents to Issue 3 that reducing contribution limits would drive contributions out of the limelight, where at least voters can see them on reports, into the shadowy world of "independent interest groups." Why don't the big money interests do that now? There's nothing to stop them. Their current actions speak to their overall preference to donate or invest directly rather than through pass through groups.

The other provision of Issue 3 of concern to some is creation of the small donor action committee, a political fund set up to collect \$50-sized contributions, which the charge goes, favors labor unions. While there may or may not be "devils in the details" of this proposal, on its face the concerns seem relatively minor. Why are \$10,000-sized contributions from the wealthy and legalized corporate contributions for the first time in 90 years just fine but \$50-sized contributions from working people not?

Nothing is perfect, including Issue 3. Nothing is ever final either. Problems that and will arise can be changed. That's what public officials and voters do. For now, why not error on the side of people without huge bank accounts rather than on the side of the wealthy and corporations?

Sincerely,
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