

Related to House versions of SB 335 & 336

Honorable Elections and Ethics Committee Members:

As a lifelong Michigan resident and voter, I am VERY distressed to find that Michigan is intending to increase the amount of money in our political process. SB 335 & 336 would allow candidates to solicit unlimited amounts of money for Super PACs and blurs the line of independence between candidates and independent groups because the bill allows Super PACs and candidate campaigns to share some resources including employees.

I understand that the bill passed with the vote mostly split along party lines, but it shouldn't be a partisan issue. The current system, which the bill seeks to expand, gives excessive of power to a handful of contributors. The Michigan Campaign Finance Network's analysis of the 2016 election showed that half of the money that independent spenders received came from just 12 sources.

The Senate bill would continue worrisome trends in our state. The Center for Public Integrity already ranks Michigan 50th in the nation for transparency. Craig Mauger of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network says this bill would make it even more difficult for voters like myself to know who's lobbying and thereby influencing government officials who are supposed to be representing US. He says it will also encourage giving money in a way that's impossible for voters and regulators to track, and will likely drive the cost of elections even higher, something I feel is unconscionable when there are so many other important issues in our state, nation and world that that money could help to address.

Rather than being an expression of free speech, further opening the floodgates to even more money, and even less separation between politicians and those with the resources to manipulate them, DECREASES the number and impact of other voices heard by those elected to represent them. This can only decrease the power of independent Michigan voters and undermines the intent of the democratic system set up by our founding fathers; one person, one vote.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments on this important issue.

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