



League of Women Voters of Portland

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Date: May 28, 2024

To: Chair Vega Pederson,
Commissioners Beason, Brim-Edwards, Meieran, and Stegmann

From: League of Women Voters of Portland
Carolyn Buppert, President
Debbie Aiona, Action Committee chair
Janice Thompson, Action Committee vice chair

Re: Support for Commissioner Beason's Good Government Budget Package

Meaningful transparency of governmental actions, public campaign finance reform, and ready access to public records are long-time League of Women Voters priorities. We urge support for Commissioner Beason's good government budget package for the following reasons.

Develop a Small Donor Program

- Small donor programs facilitate a diverse range of candidates and enhance public trust in elections and governance.
- Public campaign financing can also assist in addressing independent expenditures. Though Oregon and Multnomah County have better disclosure of donors to independent spending than at the federal level and in many other jurisdictions, **disclosure alone** is not enough.
- The League supports **both** disclosure and public financing. What is needed next in Multnomah County is to develop a small donor public campaign finance program.

Public Records Support

- A staff person dedicated to handling public records requests is vital to ensure meaningful transparency.

Board Clerk Assistance

- The Board Clerk plays a vital role in ensuring transparent access to Board records and facilitating public participation at Commission meetings. We support more funding for the Clerk's office, especially for website improvements.

Community Budget Advisory Committee Transparency

- Budget development is perhaps the most important job of any governmental entity and must include meaningful opportunities for public input. The County's budget advisory groups must be more effective and operate with full transparency. An important first step is for the Office of Community Involvement to develop, by the end of September, a work plan to improve the current budget advisory procedures.

Thank you for considering these comments.

League of Women Voters of Portland:

To promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government.