

David Souers  
Friendship  
LD 1350

Good morning Senator Craig Hickman, Representative Laura Supica, and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee. My name is David Souers, from Friendship, Maine. I am testifying in opposition to LD 1350 "An Act to Ban Corporate Contributions to Candidates" for the following reasons:

This bill prohibits a business entity from making contributions to candidates. My wife and I support this bill, as we have seen how manipulative businesses have been attempting to "buy" elections with donations and perks of all kinds to serve their self interest at the expense of the overall population of our state and nation..

Walter Cronkite, one our most recognized and reputable news persons said: "The ruling class is the rich. . . . And those people are so able to manipulate our democracy that they really control the democracy." Cronkite's point was that money in large amounts coming from a single source, like a business, owned by one or a few people making decisions that serve their interests over the public interest has far too much influence on our elected officials. Using the wealth of a business is far greater a tool than what individual voters can apply. In addition, businesses find ways to write off their contributions and expenditures used to influence representatives, as business expenses for a tax deduction. Out state loses to over powering business influence and loses tax revenue.

Businesses with enough resources can also dominate with their influence in government to the disadvantage of other businesses, both competitors and businesses who might be penalized by decisions that favor the dominant business contributor. The same disadvantages can apply across the state and to municipalities or communities that the business contributor may be affecting.

We can very easily see how this is playing out in Washington DC where Elon Musk has bought his way into the White House with his many contributions to the Presidential campaign and other federal and state election races. Musk has had a tremendous adverse impact on the federal government, states, cities, communities, public services and many businesses that are involved in a wide variety of public services either as service providers or recipients. Critical functions of government have been cut or compromised without appropriate review, planning and careful execution, leaving many states, cities, communities, people and programs stranded, often with wasted resources at significant unaccounted expense. Businesses under contract, with expended funds and materials, commitments and contracts for personnel, facilities and materials are in some cases going out of business or drastically cutting back in ways that are hardships to everyone they touch. In addition, the economies of regions that these services and businesses touch are being reduced, affecting every government, community and smaller business that have no direct connection with the original donor business that influenced the original politicians who made decisions after obtaining, benefitting from and influenced by the corporate contributions.

If ever we had a problem with, and proof that corporate donations are harmful to our state, this is the time that we can clearly see it.

I advocate to the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee that LD 1350 ought not to pass.