

From: **Rev Joseph Santos-Lyons** <joseph@apano.org>
Date: Wed, Jul 6, 2016 at 2:36 PM
Subject: Campaign Finance Reform and Communities of Color
To: marco.circosta@multco.us

Dear Marco and Members of the Charter Review,

APANO strongly supports efforts to reduce the influence of money in politics and to strengthen our democratic process by setting reasonable contribution limits for candidates. Multnomah County has an opportunity with the "Honest Elections" proposal to advance good public policy in alignment with County equity goals, and challenge the corruption of our electoral system.

As an organization, APANO has long sought to raise the voices of people of color, immigrant communities, and Oregonians of many different backgrounds. But one of the biggest structural barriers to this has been the role of money in politics.

The lack of a basic contribution limit has led to exponential increases in the cost of a campaign to serve as an elected official in Oregon. This creates a significant racial disparity, as it places a disproportionate amount of power in the hands of a handful of millionaires. When one or two millionaires can pump major donations into campaigns, they undermine our basic democratic principles - one person one vote. We have seen this affect both Republican and Democrat. And the most successful candidates often have wide networks of wealthy people who are willing to financially support their campaigns.

This dynamic makes it very difficult for low-income communities, and communities that have been historically disenfranchised, to have their voices heard equally in our political process. If you need to have a wealthy network to be a candidate, people who don't have that network struggle to run an effective campaign. And because many communities of color in Oregon do not have access to those networks, and experience higher rates of poverty, it is hard for a person of color to run for office.

Oregon is a diverse state, and it needs to have more diversity in its elected positions. If we can limit the amount that a wealthy donor can give to a candidate, we can help to bring down the costs of running for office. And that will allow young people, people of color, people from both low-income and rural communities, and people of different backgrounds to participate in our democracy by serving as candidates. Every community should be able to vote for a true representative in their government, who understands their experiences because they have also shared those experiences.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Joseph

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Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons, Executive Director My gender pronouns are: he/him

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Mark your calendars for the Jade International Night Market August 20th and 27th!

Please join us in rooting our community in place through celebration

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Vendors and performances representing cultures from all over the world and speakers from the neighborhood. Visit the website [here](#)

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- Save the date:

APANO's Rolling Tides Statewide Convention is on October 1st.

Join us for a day of interactive workshops, inspiring cultural performances, and a unique opportunity to build your knowledge, skills, and relationships. Check out the details [here](#).