



January, 13, 2018

The Honorable Barbara Griffin, Chairman
Election Law and Internal Affairs
Legislative Office Building, Room 308
Concord, NH 03301

TESTIMONY in SUPPORT of HB 1368

Dear Members of House Election Law Committee,

For the record my name is Olivia Zink, Open Democracy.

We need to reduce the influence of big money in politics, and increase the voices of average citizens. This bill provides transparency and accountability.

The Legislature has an opportunity this year to start reviewing and repairing New Hampshire's campaign finance laws.

In 2010, gubernatorial candidate John Stephen caused a stir when he raised over \$100,000 from 30 limited liability corporations at two addresses in Massachusetts and Connecticut that were traced to Dunkin' Donuts franchises.

On August 18, 2010 13 LLC at the same address gave

Gubernatorial candidate Kevin Smith has picked up where Stephen left off. Nearly half of Smith's \$324,000 in contributions came from LLCs at the same addresses.

In Smith's campaign finance report, he lists \$99,000 in contributions from 50 LLCs related to Dunkin' Donut franchises, 47 with the same Westborough, MA address. Smith received another \$55,000 in donations from 11 LLCs at two addresses in Newington, NH and Yonkers, NY that serve as headquarters for Planet Fitness health clubs.

But nothing in the current law prohibits multiple limited-liability companies controlled by the same individual to donate on behalf of each LLC, making it easy for wealthy donors to exceed the statutory limits.¹

¹ <https://stateimpact.npr.org/new-hampshire/2012/08/27/gov-candidate-kevin-smith-sees-big-benefit-from-campaign-finance-loophole/>

In 2012, Kevin Landrigan wrote a story cashing in on campaign donations, he says “In Smith’s case, all the LLCs had Deck as their beginning name, followed by a number or a second name, as in Deck 18-6309 LLC (\$1,750) and Deck Atlantic 1720 LLC (\$2,500), for example.²

What’s even more curious is the 47 checks that came from 82 Flanders Road in Westborough, Mass.

In Stephen’s 2010 campaign for governor, his first report had 17 \$2,000 campaign checks from different-named LLCs with the same address. The address? You guessed it: 82 Flanders Road.

Everyone needs to plays by fair common sense rules and be held accountable.

Please Vote OTP and fix this loophole before the next election.

Respectfully,

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² <http://www.nashuatelegraph.com/news/972909-469/cashing-in-on-campaign-donations.html>