

Chair Kiffmeyer, and members, my name is George Beck. I am on the Board of Clean Elections Minnesota, a non-partisan, nonprofit that supports fair elections in our state.

Last year the Senate Victory Fund sought and received the approval of the Campaign Finance Board to create a loophole around the law prohibiting campaign contributions during the legislative session. The Fund proposed to create what amounts to a private club during the session for its legislators, and then invited lobbyists and others seeking legislators' time and favors. The general public was not welcome.

The club would be supported by contributions from lobbyists made *prior* to the session. Access would then be provided during the session based on those pre-session payments. The Board unfortunately decided that this did not violate the "no contributions during the session" law. But, in fact, it created a special opportunity for lobbyists and their clients who had circumvented state law, by prepaying for the exclusive privilege to lobby elected officials while the legislature was in session.

This undemocratic special interest plan *at least* violates the spirit of state law and needs to clearly outlawed.

S.F. 3283 specifically prohibits contributions from lobbyists, at any time of the year, which is used to provide special access to a meeting with legislators during a regular or special session where the public is not invited.

To his credit, Senate Majority Leader Jeremy Miller has recently been quoted as saying that he has no plans to hold such an event. This bill had bipartisan support in the House and we hope it receives unanimous support from this committee.

Thank you.