

Chair Carlson, 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.

In 2021 a party unit sought and received the approval of the Campaign Finance Board to create a fundraiser that challenged the law prohibiting campaign contributions during the legislative session. The party unit proposed to create an event during the session for its legislators, and then invited lobbyists and others seeking legislators' time. The general public was not welcome.

The event 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 by prepaying for the exclusive privilege to lobby elected officials while the legislature was in session.

This special interest plan at least violates the spirit of state law and needs to be addressed.

H.F.0066, sponsored by Sen. Port, 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.

This bill had bipartisan support in the House in the past and we hope it receives unanimous support from this committee.

Thank you.