



**Verbal Testimony of Jacqueline Doyer**  
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**HF2044 | Sub-Committee on State Government**  
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Chair Harris, Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding House File 2044.

My name is Jacqueline Doyer, and I am the Legal Policy Director for Honest Elections Project Action, a nonprofit entity defending the right of every American to vote in free and honest elections.

While it is already illegal for foreign nationals to finance campaigns for public office, it is not currently illegal at the state or federal level for a foreign national to spend on state ballot measure campaigns. This “foreign funding loophole” allows the same foreign billionaires forbidden from influencing candidate campaigns the freedom to spend millions on campaigns targeting state constitutions. Recognizing this danger for what it is—foreign influence in American elections—in just the last two years nine states have banned foreign funding in state ballot measure campaigns. Iowa should be the tenth.

This is not a hypothetical concern. In states across the country, millions of dollars in foreign-tied funds have been spent to influence the outcome of state ballot measures and legislatively referred constitutional amendments. According to research by [Americans for Public Trust](#), a single group—the Sixteen Thirty Fund—has simultaneously received nearly \$300 million in donations from a Swiss billionaire named Hansjörg Wyss and spent \$130 million on state and local ballot measure campaigns in 26 states. While we have evidence of this spending tied to a Swiss billionaire, nothing is stopping hostile foreign powers like China or Russia from doing the same.

Decisions as significant as amending the constitution belong exclusively in the hands of the citizens of this country and the voters of this state. Foreign nationals have no business influencing ballot measures, and these campaigns should not be allowed to serve as a Trojan Horse for foreign interference in the American democratic process.

It is time to close the foreign funding loophole. Effective legislation banning foreign funding will address a few key areas, without violating donor privacy and while upholding the free speech rights of American citizens.

First, states must ban both direct *and indirect* foreign contributions to these campaigns. Further, a ban should be designed to prevent groups from laundering large sums of foreign money into campaigns by accepting and using foreign donations for other purposes that free up resources for ballot measure contributions. A clear way to accomplish this is to require donors to certify they have not received more than a specified amount of foreign funding over a time period prior to the contribution (such as \$100,000 over a four-year period).



Second, these same protections should be applied to independent expenditures, to avoid shifting foreign spending to that domain.

Third, the ban must apply to foreign nationals, not just foreign governments or political parties alone. Foreign meddling is toxic no matter whether it originates from the Chinese government or from a foreign activist like Hansjörg Wyss.

House File 2044 would make great strides towards safeguarding the integrity of Iowa's elections. I applaud your efforts on this important matter and welcome any questions you may have.