What makes Ron UNz’s campaign finance initiative a cure worse than the disease?

We need to clean up our political system, not add more problems to the mix. Prop. 25 includes some positive changes, but on the whole, this 24-page initiative would only increase the abuses and increase taxes by more than $55 million every year. Instead of leveling the playing field to give qualified new candidates a fair chance, it includes loopholes and exemptions that would further advantage incumbents, wealthy candidates and big special interests. It would also create a new scheme to force taxpayers to subsidize the cost of political advertising.

An UNwanted $55 Million Tax Increase to Subsidize Political Ads
The California Taxpayers Association and other taxpayer groups oppose Prop. 25 because it would force taxpayers to subsidize the cost of political advertising. In fact, it would make California the first state in the country to force taxpayers to subsidize political advertising for initiative campaigns, even those issues with which they disagree. The state’s Independent Legislative Analyst estimates Prop. 25’s total cost at more than $55 million tax dollars annually, with automatic increases every year. Because Prop. 25 is a new mandated taxpayer expenditure – not a voluntary tax form check-off – it would necessitate a tax increase or cuts to education and other services.

UNz’s UNfair Loophole for Big Special Interests
Prop. 25 would not stem the flow of special interest money. On the contrary, it contains a controversial loophole that would simply redirect the money into a less accountable avenue of influence. It allows the special interests to funnel unlimited sums of “soft money” through the political parties. Worse, unlike the federal “soft money” loophole, Prop. 25’s loophole would be written right into state law. It doesn’t simply invite the special interests to avoid campaign contribution limits. It would allow them to do so under the protection of state law. Not surprisingly, Prop. 25’s gaping loophole is one of the primary reasons campaign finance reform advocates, like the League of Women Voters, oppose Prop. 25. They want fair and equitable reform that levels the playing field and Prop. 25 promises the opposite.

UNz’s UNlevel Playing Field — UNfair Advantages for Millionaire Candidates and Incumbents
Proposition 25, Section 85306(b): “Nothing in this Act shall prohibit a candidate from making unlimited contributions to his or her own campaign.”

Prop. 25 also limits the money all but one type of candidate could raise from individuals. Millionaire candidates, like Prop. 25’s sponsor Ron Unz, are exempted from the initiative’s contribution limit and could spend unlimited amounts of their own money to get elected, making politics even more of a rich man’s game. Coupled with its special interest loophole, Prop. 25’s uneven contribution limits would give us a new campaign financing system that essentially restricts the wherewithal of new challengers while giving further advantages to wealthy people and incumbents — especially incumbents who are beholden to special interests.

Instead of cleaning up our political system, UNz’s UNfair, UNlevel playing field would add to the abuses and hit taxpayers with a $55+ million annual tax increase. Vote No on 25!