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# Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, Governor

*Citizens' Initiative Review Commission*

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February 14, 2014

Senator Rosenbaum, Chair

Senator Ferrioli, Vice Chair

Senate Rules Committee, Members

**RE: Senate Bill 1544**

Chair Rosenbaum, Vice Chair Ferrioli, and members of the committee,

I am Jerry Hudson, Interim President of Marylhurst University and Chair of the Citizens' Initiative Review Commission. Thank you for the opportunity to submit the following comments in support of Senate Bill 1544.

The Citizens' Initiative Review Commission (CIRC) was established as an independently-funded state commission by House Bill 2634 in 2011. The commission's charge is to oversee citizen reviews of ballot measures.

In order to preserve the commission's independence from political pressure, it was initially housed within the Oregon Health Licensing Commission. In 2013, the commission became a semi-independent agency. This change was made in order to provide the CIRC with greater flexibility in the management of its administrative and budgetary affairs. A sunset was placed on the commission at that time to ensure that the new structure was effective.

Since that time, the commission has adopted administrative rules, set its biennial budget, and received funds and made preparations for the 2014 reviews. We are entering into contracts with the Policy Consensus Initiative at Portland State University to provide administrative services, and with the nonprofit Healthy Democracy to provide program services. The commission is well functioning and thriving as a semi-independent agency.

The bill before you would make changes to the commission to allow it to better fulfill its mission. First, it would increase our efficiency by allowing the CIRC to test a shorter, less expensive process. 2014 is a tremendous opportunity for such a test, as the National Science Foundation has provided a grant to independent researchers to study the program and any changes made to it. Secondly, it would increase panelist representation on the commission. Finally, it would lift the sunset on the commission. Lifting the sunset will provide certainty to the private individuals and foundations that provide the funding for this important process.

Senate Bill 1544 is an important bill that will allow the CIRC to continue and expand its work to bring citizens from all areas of the state and every political persuasion together to provide quality, unbiased information for their fellow voters.

I am proud of the success the CIR has shown over the past two cycles, and am honored to serve as the commission's chair.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerry E. Hudson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Dr. Jerry Hudson  
Chair, Citizens' Initiative Review Commission