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September 14, 2017

Dear Joint Committee on Referendum 301, Co-Chair Richard Devlin and Co-Chair Dan Rayfield

I write as the Executive Director of Portland Jobs With Justice to provide input on the proposed ballot title for Referendum 301. We have been outraged to learn about the effort to take away health care from 375,000 of our fellow Oregonians. It is of critical importance to us and our coalition of over 100 unions and community groups that our wonderful state do everything it can to make sure none of us go without health care, and we worry that the title of Referendum 301, as currently written, will mislead voters and hurt our community.

The title must explicitly state how many Oregonians will lose coverage if HB 2391 is repealed so that voters are clear on what is at stake. The title and explanation should also make clear that if HB 2391 is repealed we will have to make painful and unnecessary decisions about which vulnerable populations will keep and lose their coverage.

It is also clear that Referendum 301 will result in increased premiums for Oregonians who purchase health insurance on the individual market. The number of people who see their premiums increase if HB 2391 is repealed should be included in the ballot title.

Thank you for your efforts to make the actual effects of Referendum 301 known to Oregon voters in the ballot title.

Sincerely,

Will Layng
Executive Director, Portland Jobs With Justice

