



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 98-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 22, 2018

To: [Senate Committee on Rules](#)
[Senate Majority Leader Ginny Burdick](#), Chair


Re: **SB 1510 -7 Amendment** –initiative petition titles during Supreme Court review – **Comment**

The League of Women Voters of the United States has a Citizen’s Right to Know position that says in part, “The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation at all levels of government.” The LWV of Oregon has another position that says in part, “The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the constitutional right of Oregon citizens to propose or revise statutes through the direct initiative process.”

In the context of commenting on the Secretary of State’s proposed administrative rule 165-014-005 on the *State Initiative and Referendum Manual*, the LWV of Oregon was the origin of the idea that petitions could use the Attorney General’s certified ballot title and continue signature gathering while awaiting any appeal of the ballot title to the Oregon Supreme Court. This idea was better, in the League’s opinion, than the Secretary of State’s original proposal to allow petitioning to continue without any ballot title while awaiting a decision of the Oregon Supreme Court. Because the ballot titles from the Attorney General and from the Oregon Supreme Court are often the same or nearly the same, the League reasoned that at least the voters would have a better idea of what they were signing, rather than having to rely on what a petition circulator might tell them. This idea would have the further advantage that individuals or organizations could not “game the system” by using an appeal to the Oregon Supreme Court to delay signature gathering by several months, thereby possibly defeating a petition before it even reaches the ballot for voters to have their say. In this context, the League’s positions are clear; the voter’s right to know and their right to petition their government are controlling.

In the context of SB 1510 and its proposed -7 amendment, the LWV of Oregon does not have an opinion on whether petitioning should proceed with an Attorney General’s ballot title, as the Secretary of State now proposes, or await a certified ballot title from the Oregon Supreme Court. Both methods seem to serve the voters’ interest in knowing what they are signing. The League’s positions are the result of lengthy studies and member consensus, but our positions are not detailed enough to make this distinction.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.


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