

June 19, 2019

Honorable Members of the House Committee on Rules:

I oppose SB 761 and urge you to vote No on it. It is an attempt to throttle citizen initiatives, a right which citizens derive from the State Constitution. This right is needed to prevent tyranny of the majority in the Legislature.

There are already many challenging hurdles for citizen activists to get initiatives on the ballot. This bill adds more obstacles and, as explained at the March 13 Senate Hearing on SB 761 by Steve Elzinga, representing the Oregon Secretary of State:

“... the current language of SB 761 would create a situation where a single volunteer who mistakenly violated the e-sheet printing prohibition could disqualify many thousands of completely valid signatures on other e-sheets. This is highly disproportionate, unnecessarily punitive, and may violate Constitutional rights. There are also significant enforceability challenges since the Elections Division has no way to know who printed an e-sheet by examining the sheet itself.

Please heed Mr. Elzinga’s words and those of Sal Peralta, Independent Party of Oregon, and Daniel Meek, Progressive Party of Oregon, both of whom also gave opposition testimony for the March 13 Hearing.

Thank you.

Elizabeth Van Staaveren, McMinnville