

June 20, 2019

Chair Holvey and Members of the House Committee on Rules:

Last summer I volunteered with Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon to help monitor the signature verification process for the initiative petitions that became Measure 105 and Measure 106. I had never gone through that process before and was fascinated by the whole initiative petition process. I value how accessible Oregon's political and governing processes are, which is why I am writing in support of SB 761A. In order for our democracy to function properly, we must ensure that our elections process is transparent; safeguarded from fraud; and that our Secretary of State is given the tools necessary to ensure integrity throughout the electoral process.

Every Oregon voter should have access to the initiative and referendum process AND the information they need to engage in that process in a meaningful and educated manner. There are strict regulations that govern how multiple-signature petition sheets can and can't be used by paid and volunteer signature gatherers, what information needs to be provided to voters when their signatures are requested using multiple-signature sheets, and what procedures need to be followed to hold signature gatherers accountable to the rules when they are using these sheets. These standards ensure integrity in elections and were put in place to combat fraud and abuse that arose during the 1990s. SB 761A simply aims to align the standards for e-sheets with those procedures.

E-sheets have unfortunately become a loophole that waters down the standards and procedures associated with Oregon's initiative and referendum process. They have been used in mass mailings and at passive gathering stations where the people distributing them don't provide the information about the measure or witness signatures the way they would be required to if they were using multiple-signature petition sheets. SB761A is about preserving the integrity of Oregon's initiative and referendum process. I respectfully urge the committee to vote yes on SB 761A.

Sincerely,
Fatuma Gedi
Portland, OR