

June 20, 2019

Chair Holvey, Vice-Chairs Williamson and Wilson, and Members of the House Committee on Rules:

I am writing to urge the committee's support for SB 761A. In the summer of 2018, I volunteered with Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon to monitor the signature verification process for the initiative petitions that eventually became Ballot Measures 105 and 106. My support for SB 761A is based on concerns that grew out of that experience, regarding e-sheets.

As a volunteer observer, I learned that volunteer sheets, including e-sheets, are not held to the same level of scrutiny as paid-signature gathering sheets. If there is campaign fraud and violations when volunteer sheets including e-sheets are used, our current accountability mechanisms don't allow for adequate investigations in the timeframe before ballot measures are qualified. As I observed the signature verification process for those initiative petitions, it became clear to me how the e-sheets system could be abused by special interest groups and corporations to collect signatures and manipulate the initiative petition and referendum process. Tactics like using e-sheets in mass mailings and at passive gathering stations that do not provide the measure language for signers to review, undermine the original intent of e-sheets.

SB 761A would provide clarity in our law around the proper use of e-sheets thereby reducing the risk that e-sheets will be misused or abused. SB 761A would ensure that e-sheets are used in a manner that is consistent with the laws already put in place to protect the integrity of our petition circulation and signature gathering system. Building public trust in our democratic institutions and processes is essential to voter engagement. SB 761A will allow Oregon voters to trust that our initiative petition and referendum processes are of the utmost integrity, and that actual citizens, as opposed to special interest groups and corporations, are making their voices heard.

I urge the committee to please vote in support of SB 761A.

Thank you for your attention on this issue.

Katie Cottrell
Eugene