

Good afternoon Chair Jama and Members of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My

name is Matt Evans, I'm a native Oregonian and am here

today representing the Taxpayer Association of Oregon. We

urge a NO vote on SJR 30.

I've lived in Oregon my entire life, and I can remember a time

when our State was considered a national leader. Our land-

use system allowed the preservation of farmland, our bottle

bill helped get trash off our streets and sidewalks and our

initiative and referendum system gave the average

Oregonian a voice in government. Some of the luster has

come off those ideas as housing prices have risen out of

control and bottle deposits have become a primary source

of income allowing people to live on the streets. Now SJR 30

is put forward to complete the tarnishing of direct

democracy. Once a national beacon of citizen participation in government, this body now considers a resolution that would have the effect of locking the average Oregonian out of the system.

Under the regime envisioned in SJR 30, it will no longer be possible for a rag-tag group of grassroots citizens with an idea they believe in and a dream to qualify that idea for the ballot. Instead, we will be left with only the ideas supported by the two most deep-pocketed groups in the State – Big Corporations and Labor Unions. They alone will be able to afford putting those ideas before voters. Is that really a goal worth supporting?

The Oregon Legislature has spent most of the last 40 years curtailing the initiative and referendum process of which we

were once so proud. From phony “emergencies” attached to every piece of legislation to limits on how signatures can be gathered, and which ones qualify as “legal,” the assault has been constant – and effective if the idea was to get the average Oregonian out of the idea business and force him or her to cede more of their own power to the Legislature.

If Democracy Dies in Darkness, a vote for SJR 30 turns off even more of the lights. Please vote no on SJR 30.