

Submitter: John Bock
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Special Committee On Referendum Petition
2026-302
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1599

I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to SB 1599.

Oregon's referendum process exists to ensure that the will of the people is heard through broad, fair, and accessible elections. When Oregonians take the time to gather signatures, engage their communities, and place a measure before voters, that process deserves to occur during a high-participation election, not one that limits turnout. Moving a referendum to a smaller or off-cycle election limits voter turnout, undermines the vote-by-mail system, which should expand—not limit—democratic participation and opens the door to manipulating election timing to influence outcomes.

Referendums should be decided by as many Oregonians as possible—not quietly resolved during low-visibility elections. I urge lawmakers to respect the integrity of Oregon's referendum process and oppose any effort to move citizen-led measures to smaller election dates. SB 1599 is a political effort to alter Oregon's election timeline after the fact. Oregonians signed petitions with the clear understanding—and written assurance—that this measure would appear on the November 3, 2026 General Election ballot.

Changing the election date now is fundamentally unfair and disenfranchises hundreds of thousands of voters who acted in good faith. The Legislature had ample opportunity to address this issue earlier and chose not to do so.

Respectfully,
John S Bock
Lebanon, OR