

Submitter: Kerrt Holloway

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Special Committee On Referendum Petition  
2026-302

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1599

Written Testimony – Opposition to SB 1599

Joint Special Committee on Re...

Public Hearing – February 9, 2026

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kerry Holloway, and I am an Oregon voter submitting testimony in opposition to SB 1599, which moves the referendum vote to the May 2026 primary election.

I oppose this bill because a referendum belongs in a general election, not a partisan primary.

Referendum Petition 2026-302 was referred to the people with the clear expectation that all voters would have equal access and participation. Moving this vote to a May primary effectively limits participation and undermines the intent of the referendum process—whether intentional or not.

Oregon has closed primaries. Many voters are non-affiliated or minor-party voters who do not participate in partisan primaries. While the referendum may technically appear on the ballot, placing it in a primary election predictably reduces turnout and skews participation, which is not appropriate for a statewide decision of this importance.

Referendums exist to give the people a direct voice—not a narrowed one.

Changing the election date after the referendum has already been initiated creates the appearance of manipulating timing to influence outcomes. That erodes public trust in the process and fuels cynicism about whether citizen-led actions are truly respected by the legislature.

If the Legislature believes in transparency, fairness, and voter confidence, then referendum measures should be voted on during general elections, when participation is highest and representation is broadest.

I urge you to oppose SB 1599 and allow this referendum to be decided in a general election, where it belongs.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully,

Kerry Holloway

Oregon Voter