

Submitter: Shawn Gallagher

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Special Committee On Referendum Petition
2026-302

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1599

I submit this testimony in opposition to SB 1599.

More than 250,000 Oregonians signed Referendum Petition 2026-302 with the clear expectation that this measure would appear on the November general election ballot, when voter participation is historically highest. Moving the vote to the May primary undermines that expectation and risks limiting broad public participation in a decision of significant statewide importance.

The proposed change also creates practical barriers to public engagement. A May election substantially reduces the time and opportunity for citizens to prepare and submit statements for the Voters' Pamphlet, limiting voters' access to balanced information. Given the scale of the policy at issue, including billions of dollars in taxes and fees, Oregonians deserve a full and fair opportunity to consider and debate it.

Election timing should promote transparency, participation, and trust in the democratic process. Altering the date after voters have already acted raises serious concerns and should not be done lightly or without compelling justification.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to reject SB 1599 and allow the referendum to proceed as originally intended in the November election.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

-Shawn Gallagher, USMC veteran and professional firefighter