

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

Testimony in Opposition to SB 1599
Submitted by: Christopher Canazaro
City of Residence: Lake Oswego, Oregon

Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christopher Canazaro, and I am an Oregon resident, a registered voter, and one of the citizens who signed Referendum Petition 2026-302. I am writing today to respectfully but firmly oppose Senate Bill 1599.

I signed the referendum petition because I believe Oregonians deserve the right to vote on major tax and fee increases that directly affect our families, our jobs, and our daily lives. I participated in that process in good faith, with the clear understanding that this important question would be decided at the November 2026 General Election—when voter participation is highest and most representative of the public as a whole.

SB 1599 would change that understanding after the fact.

Moving the vote from November to the May primary election may appear to be a minor scheduling adjustment, but to many of us it feels like a fundamental change to the rules in the middle of the game. The general election is when the broadest cross-section of Oregonians participate. The primary election, by contrast, typically draws far fewer voters and is not an equivalent substitute for deciding a statewide issue of this magnitude.

More than 250,000 Oregonians signed the referendum petition with the expectation that their voices would be heard in November. Changing the date now risks undermining public confidence in the integrity of the referendum process itself. Whether one supports or opposes the underlying policy, the process should be fair, predictable, and above political maneuvering.

I want to emphasize that my opposition to SB 1599 is rooted in a simple principle: when citizens use the constitutional referendum process, the Legislature should not take actions that diminish or devalue that effort. Allowing this vote to occur as originally expected—at the November general election—respects both the letter and the spirit of Oregon's long tradition of direct democracy.

I urge you to consider how this bill will be perceived by ordinary voters like me. Many will see it as an attempt to influence the outcome by reducing turnout rather than allowing the people to decide in the most open and inclusive forum available. That perception alone should give you pause.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to oppose SB 1599 and allow Referendum Petition 2026-302 to be voted on at the November 2026 General Election as originally anticipated.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,
Christopher Canazaro