

Submitter: Kevin Hobbs

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Special Committee On Referendum Petition  
2026-302

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1599

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kevin Hobbs, and I'm submitting opposing testimony on SB 1599, which would move the vote on Referendum Petition 2026-302—referring parts of Chapter 1, Oregon Laws 2025 (special session)—to the May 19, 2026 primary election.

I oppose SB 1599 for three reasons:

1. It undermines the spirit of Oregon's referendum process. Voters signed and engaged with this petition under the understanding it would be decided at the November 3, 2026 General Election, when statewide turnout is typically highest and most representative.
2. It risks a less representative outcome. Primary elections often have lower participation and, depending on party rules, can be more limited in who participates in key contests—making them a poor venue for a major statewide policy decision.
3. It creates confusion and sets a bad precedent. Moving an already-initiated referral to a different election date looks like political gamesmanship and will reduce public trust in the Legislature and in Oregon elections.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to vote NO on SB 1599 and keep the referendum where voters reasonably expected it: the November 2026 General Election.