

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

Testimony in Strong Opposition to SB 1599

Submitted to: Joint Special Committee on Referendum Petition 2026-302

Date: February 7, 2026

Position: OPPOSE – Do NOT move the referendum to May

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing as an outraged Oregon voter and one of the more than 250,000 citizens who personally helped qualify Referendum Petition 2026-302 for the November ballot. The massive number of bipartisan voters from all parties didn't just sign a petition—we demanded our right to vote on this massive tax-and-fee hike in the November 2026 general election, when the maximum number of Oregonians can participate. That was the clear promise and expectation on every signature sheet, in every announcement from the Secretary of State, and in the law itself.

Now, with SB 1599, you're trying to pull a blatant bait-and-switch to shove it into the low-turnout May primary. This isn't democracy—it's a cynical power grab, plain and simple. Let's call it what it is: political cowardice and election rigging.

Democrats in Salem know full well that their \$4.3 billion transportation tax package—6 cents more per gallon on gas, brand-new payroll taxes on employers, jacked-up vehicle registration fees—is deeply unpopular statewide. Originally rammed through in a special session, ignored the massive outcry, and now being terrified of facing the full electorate in November when independents, working families, and everyday taxpayers actually show up to vote. So instead, they want to hide it on a May primary ballot, when turnout is a fraction of the general election—often under 40%—and their base is more likely to drag themselves to the polls while the rest of us are busy working or just checked out from yet another rigged Salem scheme.

This move spits directly in the face of every one of us who gathered signatures in the rain, knocked on doors, and collected those petitions in good faith with expectation for November's ballot. We have already been told—explicitly—that this is to be placed on the November general election ballot.

Changing the rules after we've already qualified it isn't just unfair; it's an assault on the people's legal referendum power under the Oregon Constitution. You're not "streamlining" anything, and you know it—you're subverting the will of over a quarter-million voters because you don't like the likely outcome on a November ballot.

If this bill passes, without any doubt sets a dangerous precedent: where any time the people legally force a referendum on a bad law, the majority party can just rewrite the election date to minimize opposition. That's not democratic leadership; that's Marxist authoritarianism dressed up as procedure.

And declaring an "emergency" for this? The legal scholars are laughing. The only emergency here is the panic in Democratic leadership over losing control.

I expect this committee to kill SB 1599 immediately. Keep the referendum on the November ballot where it legally belongs. Let the peoples vote decide in November—without your thumb on the scale.

If you ram this through anyway, I expect an immediate court filing challenge requesting a restraint order to stop any printing of May ballots until the court makes a final ruling. We'll see if the court will allow you to steal the voice of over a quarter million votes already set for November.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I demand you respect the petition process and all bipartisan voters from all political parties who made this referendum possible.

Sincerely,

David Christoson

Oregon

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Registered Oregon Voter