

Submitter: Dennis Paulsen
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 Dennis Paulsen, and I live in Hillsboro, Oregon. I'm writing to strongly oppose SB 1599, which would move the election for Referendum Petition 2026-302 from the November 2026 general election to the May 2026 primary election.

More than 250,000 Oregonians used a constitutional, lawful process to refer this issue to the voters. By moving the vote date after signatures have been gathered and verified, SB 1599 changes the rules midstream and undermines trust in Oregon's referendum process. Not to mention our democratic rights as voters. Oregon Democrats attempted to take 4.3 billion from Oregonians without us having a say in it, and now they are trying to hide it in the primary election. No, we have a voice and will not be silenced.

I oppose SB 1599 for three reasons:

1. Fairness and voter confidence

If citizens follow the rules, the Legislature should not reposition the election calendar to change the political dynamics of the vote. Regardless of where someone stands on the underlying transportation package, moving the election date creates the appearance that the outcome is being managed rather than decided by voters.

2. Turnout and representativeness

A vote of this magnitude should be decided in a high-participation general election where the broadest cross-section of Oregonians are engaged. Scheduling it for a primary election risks a narrower electorate deciding an issue that affects everyone.

3. Respect the will of the voters who demanded a say

The signature effort shows strong public demand to vote on this question. Thousands of Oregonians took time to engage in the referendum process specifically to put it before the full electorate in November. Moving the date diminishes that effort and the public's confidence that their voice will be honored.

SB 1599 should be rejected, and the Referendum Petition 2026-302 should remain on the November 2026 ballot as originally expected, and allow the voters to weigh in without procedural gamesmanship.

Thank you for your time and for considering my testimony.

Dennis Paulsen