

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

I am writing today to voice my strong and unequivocal opposition to Senate Bill 1599. This legislation represents a transparent attempt to manipulate Oregon's democratic process and undermine the voices of more than 250,000 Oregonians who lawfully signed Referendum Petition 2026-302.

1. Silencing the Majority through Low-Turnout Elections

By moving the vote from the November general election to the May primary, SB 1599 ensures that a critical decision regarding billions of dollars in new taxes will be made by a significantly smaller, less representative portion of the electorate. Historically, primary elections in Oregon see much lower participation than general elections. Shifting this vote is a deliberate tactic to bypass the broader public will in favor of a narrower, more predictable voting bloc.

2. Erosion of Constitutional Referendum Powers

Article IV, section 1 of the Oregon Constitution reserves the power of referendum to the people. When citizens follow the rules to challenge a legislative action, the legislature should not be permitted to change those rules mid-stream because the challenge is politically inconvenient. This "emergency" designation is being used not for a true public safety crisis, but for political gamesmanship.

3. Undermining Public Trust

Voters expect fairness and transparency. When the legislature acts to "rig the system" by moving goalposts and shortening deadlines, it deeply erodes trust in our state government. This bill signals to Oregonians that their constitutional rights are only valid until they conflict with the majority's agenda.

I urge you to respect the 250,000+ citizens who demanded a vote in November. Please vote NO on SB 1599 and allow Referendum Petition 2026-302 to proceed on the general election ballot as intended by the people.