

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

Opposition to SB 1599 – Manipulation of the Referendum Process

I oppose SB 1599.

This bill intentionally shifts a statewide referendum from the November general election to a May election.

That is not an administrative adjustment—it is a political tactic. Moving a major statewide decision to a lower-turnout election predictably suppresses participation and weakens the public’s voice. That undermines voter trust and the integrity of the referendum process.

Oregon’s problem is not insufficient revenue. The state already has substantial resources. The real problems are lack of accountability, poor prioritization, and an unwillingness to confront how public money is actually spent. SB 1599 sidesteps those issues by manipulating election timing instead of addressing substance.

If state leaders truly believe their policies have broad public support, they should put them before voters in a November election—when participation is highest, and representation is strongest—not redesign the process to limit turnout.

I expect my elected officials to protect democratic norms, respect the will of voters, and reject efforts that erode confidence in our elections. I urge you to vote no on SB 1599.

Sincerely,
?John Laurin, Tillamook, Oregon