

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

My name is Jeremy Wallace and I am a resident of Bend, Oregon. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony today. I am submitting this written testimony to respectfully oppose Senate Bill 1599.

SB 1599 proposes to move the referendum vote on Referendum Petition 2026-302 from the November general election to the May primary election. Changing the election date in this way raises serious concerns about fairness, democratic process, and respect for voters.

I oppose SB 1599 for the following reasons:

It undermines the will of Oregon voters.

More than 250,000 Oregonians signed a valid referendum petition under the assumption that the vote would occur in the November general election, when turnout is historically highest. Moving the vote to a May primary, where turnout is significantly lower, diminishes the broad expression of public opinion that a general election provides.

It weakens the referendum process as a tool of direct democracy.

The referendum process is a constitutional safeguard that allows citizens to check the Legislature on major tax and policy decisions. Changing the rules after citizens have gathered signatures sends a troubling message that citizen involvement is only welcome when it produces outcomes political leadership prefers.

It creates a procedural advantage for one political outcome over another.

Holding the vote in May, with lower expected voter participation, can skew results and reduce representative input. Decisions that affect all Oregonians — especially on tax and revenue issues — deserve the most inclusive participation possible.

It erodes public trust in government.

When legislative actions appear designed to influence the conditions under which an issue is voted on rather than letting voters decide under normal circumstances, it contributes to cynicism and disengagement with the democratic process.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote “no” on SB 1599 and allow the referendum petition process to proceed as originally intended — with the vote in the November 2026 general election.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Wallace

Bend, Oregon