

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

To elected officials,

I am writing to submit testimony in opposition to SB 1599, which would move the election date for the parts of chapter 1, Oregon Laws 2025 (special session), referred to the people by Referendum Petition 2026-302, to the May 19, 2026 primary election.

This proposal undermines the purpose of the referendum process and risks limiting meaningful voter participation. Referenda exist to ensure that major policy decisions are reviewed by the broadest possible electorate. Moving this vote to a primary election, which historically has lower and more partisan-skewed turnout than a general election, reduces the likelihood that the outcome will reflect the will of the full voting public.

Oregonians signed a referendum petition with the expectation that this issue would be decided in a fair, accessible, and representative election. Changing the election date after that process is underway creates confusion, weakens public trust, and gives the appearance of manipulating timing to influence the result rather than respecting voter intent.

Important, high-impact policy decisions should be decided when the most Oregonians can participate. The general election provides the widest, most representative turnout. Moving this vote to a primary does the opposite.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to oppose SB 1599 and allow this referendum to be decided in an election that ensures maximum participation, clarity, and public confidence in the outcome.