

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

Chair, Vice-Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jordan McFarland, and I am submitting testimony in opposition to placing SB 1599 on the May ballot rather than the November general election.

My concern is not with the policy content of SB 1599 itself, but with the timing and process being proposed. Moving a statewide measure of this scale to the May election would significantly reduce voter participation and undermine the principle that major statewide decisions should be made when the greatest number of Oregonians are able to weigh in.

The May election historically sees substantially lower turnout than November. It is typically dominated by local races and party primaries, not broad statewide engagement. Placing SB 1599 on the May ballot would mean that a smaller, less representative portion of Oregon voters would be deciding an issue that affects the entire state. For a measure of this magnitude, that is neither appropriate nor fair.

The November general election is when Oregon sees its highest and most diverse voter participation. It is the election cycle that ensures the widest range of voices—rural and urban, younger and older, working families, and communities across the political spectrum—are included in the decision-making process. If the Legislature believes SB 1599 is important enough to send to voters, then it should also believe it is important enough to be decided when the most Oregonians are at the table.

Rushing a statewide measure onto the May ballot also creates challenges for public education, outreach, and informed debate. Voters deserve adequate time to understand what they are being asked to approve. Compressing the timeline risks confusion, misinformation, and reduced public trust in the process.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to keep SB 1599 on the November ballot, where voter participation is highest and where decisions of statewide consequence have traditionally—and appropriately—been made.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jordan McFarland

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