

To: Chair and Members, Joint Special Committee on Referendum Petition 2026-302
Re: SB 1599, Oppose
From: Jared Corrigall, Medford, Oregon

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I submit this testimony in strong opposition to SB 1599. This bill is not a neutral scheduling change. It is a referendum workaround. It moves the vote on Referendum Petition 2026-302 from the November 3, 2026, general election to the May 19, 2026, primary, and it does so through an emergency declaration.

Moving a qualified referendum from the general election to the primary reduces participation and weakens the legitimacy of the outcome for a statewide question that Oregonians placed before the full electorate.

Exhibits

Exhibit A. The referendum qualified for the November 3, 2026, general election.

The Oregon Elections Division issued an official bulletin that addresses Referendum Petition 2026-302 and treats it as a measure qualified for the November 3, 2026, general election ballot process, including publication of the certified ballot title.

Exhibit B. SB 1599 changes the election date to the May 19, 2026, primary.

SB 1599 explicitly moves the referendum election to the May 19, 2026, primary and includes an emergency clause.

Exhibit C. The Secretary of State's guidance shows the move depends on a rushed timeline.

Reporting on guidance attributed to the Secretary of State's office describes conditions required to move the election to May, including an emergency clause and action within a compressed timeline to meet election administration deadlines.

What SB 1599 is doing

A referendum is a constitutional check. The public invoked that check successfully. SB 1599 attempts to neutralize it by changing the election date after the referendum qualified. If the Legislature can move a qualified referendum from the general election to the primary whenever it dislikes the question, then referendum rights become conditional. They become permissioned. That is the opposite of what the referendum is for.

Oregon households are already absorbing a policy driven cost stack

This maneuver is being advanced while Oregon families are already stretched thin.

WalletHub's 2025 analysis ranks Oregon fourth in the nation for individual income tax burden.

Tax Foundation data places Oregon's state gasoline tax at 40 cents per gallon in 2025. The state announced the annual maximum rent increase allowed by statute is 10 percent for 2025.

Paid Leave Oregon contributions remain at 1 percent for 2026, with employees paying 60 percent of that rate.

Regulators approved additional electricity rate hikes for 2025, continuing upward pressure on household bills.

Transportation taxes and fees are regressive in real life. They fall hardest on working families who cannot telework, who drive older vehicles, and who commute farther because housing is unaffordable. Those are also the Oregonians most harmed when the electorate is narrowed and the vote is rushed.

Additional context

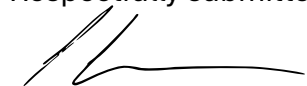
The chief petitioners listed by the Elections Division include residents of Dundee, Scio, and Beaverton, among others. That includes Willamette Valley communities. This is not a regional stunt. It is a statewide check on legislative overreach invoked through the lawful referendum process.

Conclusion

If Governor Tina Kotek and the legislative majority believe this transportation package is right, they should defend it in November in front of the broadest electorate. If they cannot prevail with the highest participation election, the answer is not to move the goalposts. The answer is to listen.

Vote no on SB 1599. Keep the referendum vote on November 3, 2026. Respect the referendum process and the will of the people.

Respectfully submitted,



Jared Corrigall
Medford, Oregon