

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

Dear Members of the Joint Special Committee on Referendum Petition,

My name is Jessica, and I am a resident of Keizer, Oregon. I am writing to strongly oppose Senate Bill 1599, which seeks to move Referendum Petition 2026-302, the voter-initiated challenge to the gas tax and fee increases in House Bill 3991 from the November 2026 general election to the May 2026 primary election.

This bill represents an unprecedented and undemocratic attempt to override the will of over 250,000 Oregonians who signed the petition to put this measure on the November ballot. The referendum process is a cornerstone of our democracy, allowing citizens to directly challenge legislative decisions. By explicitly targeting the November election, the petition signers, including myself expected a vote during the high-turnout general election, where issues receive the broadest possible public scrutiny. Shifting it to May, where voter participation typically drops to 30-40% compared to 70-80% in November, would disenfranchise many voters and stack the deck in favor of the tax increases' supporters.

Moreover, this move appears to be a calculated political strategy by Democratic leadership to shield themselves from accountability. With Governor Kotek and numerous legislators up for reelection in November, an earlier vote avoids linking this controversial tax hike to the general ballot, potentially insulating incumbents from voter backlash. Oregonians deserve transparency and fairness, not maneuvers that prioritize partisan interests over the people's voice. Historical precedents for non-November referendums do not justify altering a qualified petition after the fact, especially when it could lead to legal challenges and further erode trust in our government.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 1599 and respect the referendum process as intended. Let the voters decide in November, as the petition demanded.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Jessica

Keizer, OR