

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

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christina M. Edwards, and I am an Oregon voter submitting testimony in strong opposition to SB 1599.

SB 1599 would move the election date for portions of chapter 1, Oregon Laws 2025, that have been referred to the people through Referendum Petition 2026-302, from a general election to the May 19, 2026 primary. I oppose this change because it undermines broad voter participation and weakens the intent of the referendum process.

Referendum Petition 2026-302 reflects the public's decision to refer these laws to the voters for full consideration. General elections provide the highest voter turnout and the most representative cross section of Oregonians. Moving a referred measure to a primary election significantly reduces participation, especially among independent and unaffiliated voters who may not participate in party primaries. Decisions of this magnitude should be made when the most voters are engaged, not during a lower turnout election.

The timing of a vote should not be adjusted to favor a particular outcome or to limit voter input. Changing the election date after a successful referendum petition has already been filed creates the appearance of political maneuvering and risks eroding public trust in the legislative process. The referendum exists to give voters a direct voice, and that voice should be heard under the most inclusive conditions possible.

Oregonians deserve transparency, fairness, and respect for the democratic process. SB 1599 does not meet those standards. I urge the committee to oppose this bill and allow the referred portions of Oregon Laws 2025 to be decided during a general election when maximum voter participation can occur.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully,
Christina M. Edwards
Coos Bay, Oregon