

Submitter: Rob Galyen
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Special Committee On Referendum Petition
2026-302
Measure, Appointment or SB1599
Topic:
Opposition Statement Against Referendum Petition 2026-302

I oppose Referendum Petition 2026-302 because it represents a misguided and unfair process, and its outcome will have negative impacts on Oregon families, businesses, and the fairness of our democratic process.

1. The process undermines the intent of citizen petitioners.

More than **250,000 Oregonians signed to refer this law to the ballot with the clear understanding that the vote would occur during a general election, where turnout is highest and most representative of the electorate. Changing the election date to the May primary effectively diminishes the voice of voters who participate in general elections but do not vote in primaries. This alteration dilutes the collective will expressed when signatures were gathered and treats the referendum as a partisan maneuver rather than a genuine expression of public preference. ?

2. Primary elections have significantly lower and less representative turnout.

Historically, primary elections see far lower turnout—often less than half—compared with general elections, and are dominated by party-affiliated voters. An issue as broad and impactful as transportation funding should be decided by the widest possible cross-section of Oregonians, not a narrower subset that turns out for primaries. ?

3. The change erodes trust in the referendum process.

Referendums are a constitutional mechanism for the people to check legislative action. Moving the date after signatures were collected creates the appearance that lawmakers are manipulating the process to influence the outcome rather than respecting the public's decision to refer the legislation. This sets a concerning precedent that could weaken confidence in future citizen-initiated measures. ?

4. Voters should decide this policy in a general election.

Major policy decisions that affect all Oregon households and employers—such as fuel taxes, DMV fees, and payroll taxes—deserve the broadest democratic participation possible. A general election is the appropriate venue for issues with statewide economic impact, not a low-turnout primary dominated by a limited electorate.

For these reasons, I urge fellow Oregonians to reject moving the referendum vote to

the May 19, 2026 primary election and ensure that all voices are heard fairly and fully in deciding this important public policy

Rob Galyen
Madras, OR