

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

I am deeply concerned and disappointed that the legislature is attempting to move the election date for Referendum Petition 2026-302, from November 2026 to May 19. It is difficult to view this proposal as anything other than a political maneuver, and it sends a troubling message to the citizens of Oregon about how little regard the majority of our elected officials have for public trust and transparency.

During public testimony, you have heard clear and compelling reasons why this change should not move forward. Proceeding despite that testimony will be very telling. It will reinforce the perception that public input is being neither acknowledged in form, nor in substance.

I am also struck by the contradiction between the stated concern many of you express for “those less fortunate” and the apparent lack of concern for how this substantial tax increase will affect them. I am a middle-income Oregonian. This bill will impact my household, but we will manage by making sacrifices — fewer discretionary purchases, no trips to the coast where we would otherwise support local economies, and a shift away from “wanted” items toward only what is strictly necessary.

For low-income families, however, there are no discretionary items to eliminate. They will be forced to choose between essential needs — deciding what they can go without, even when everything they are purchasing is already necessary. That reality appears to have been given far too little consideration.

Frankly, this bill should never have passed. It was abundantly clear that Oregonians did not want it. By advancing it anyway, the legislature demonstrated a disregard for the will of the people. This erosion of trust should concern every elected official in this body.