



June 20, 2019

Re: Testimony in support of Senate Bill 761

Chair Holvey and Members of the House Rules Committee:

Basic Rights Oregon advocates for public policy that meets the needs of our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) communities, and centers on racial and transgender justice. We were formed in 1996 out of community responses to anti-gay ballot measures that had plagued Oregon for more than 20 years. Over the past 23 years we have spent much of our time advocating both against and for statewide ballot measures that impact the rights of LGBTQ Oregonians.

Basic Rights Oregon was at the negotiating table and very supportive of HB 2082 in 2007, the large omnibus initiative bill that reformed our initiative process and also instituted electronic signature gathering sheets. Unfortunately at the time there was little discussion of e-sheets in negotiations on the larger bill, and we did not anticipate the fraudulent activity that would result. E-sheets have become a loophole that water down the standards and procedures associated with Oregon's initiative and referendum process. Unlike regular sheets, they do not have the same standards to ensure fraudulent activity does not occur. Thus, they have been used in mass mailings to passive gathering stations where the people distributing them do not provide the information about the measure nor witness signatures.

Basic Rights Oregon fully supports SB 761 to reinstate the integrity of Oregon's initiative and referendum process by aligning collection standards with regular sheets. Every Oregon voter should have access to the initiative and referendum process—**and the information they need to engage in that process in a meaningful and educated manner.** This bill is an important starting point toward that effort and election integrity. We also support having a longer, more robust conversation about e-sheets after this session, with all stakeholders at the table to discuss how to improve the system for better voter engagement and education.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Nancy Haque

Executive Director