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June 20th, 2019

Chair Williamson & members of the committee

My name is Sal Peralta. I am testifying today on behalf of the Independent Party of Oregon against SB 761 which seeks to undermine and inhibit the use of single signature petition sheets.

Single signature sheets, which are available only to volunteer signature gatherers, have a validity rate that has ranged between 94-98 percent since they were introduced.

Distributing single-signer petition sheets reduces confusion and signature errors that many volunteers experience with the 5 and 10 signature sheets. It allows those who want to sign a petition, but not ask others to make a similar commitment, to more easily participate.

In short, it is the easiest and most accurate way for volunteers to participate in the initiative process.

This legislation takes the current process and makes it far more difficult.

Our main objection is that it requires volunteers to attach the entire copy of the initiative petition to sheets they are returning. I led the volunteer signature effort for Measure 47 in 2006. That measure was 27 pages single-spaced in 12-point font.

This bill would require those volunteers to print and mail the entire 27 pages and attach those to the petition sheets they return. The main impact of these changes will be to make it harder to senior citizens, students and poor people to use the initiative and referendum process.

Single signature sheets also currently require only one signature, since the person signing the petition is both the circulator and signer of the petition. This bill will require 2 signatures, which arbitrarily increases the likelihood of mistakes.

This is an absurd overreach. I would encourage your committee to send this to the legislative scrapheap. I think it would be far more honest for this committee to simply do away with these sheets rather than impose these requirements whose transparent purpose is to simply make these sheets harder to use.

Respectfully,

Sal Peralta