



March 10, 2025

TO: Members of the House Committee on Rules

FR: Preston Mann, Oregon Business & Industry

RE: Opposition to HJR 3

Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Drazan and Pham, members of the House Committee on Rules. For the record, I am Preston Mann, political director for Oregon Business & Industry (OBI).

OBI is a statewide association representing businesses from a wide variety of industries and from each of Oregon's 36 counties. In addition to being the statewide chamber of commerce, OBI is the state affiliate for the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Retail Federation. Our 1,600 member companies, more than 70% of which are small businesses, employ more than 250,000 Oregonians. Oregon's private sector businesses help drive a healthy, prosperous economy for the benefit of everyone.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to HJR 3. In general, OBI supports efforts to modernize Oregon's initiative system, provided that any changes do not unreasonably restrict voters' right to propose, amend, or repeal state laws through direct access to the ballot. Regrettably, we believe HJR 3 fails to meet this test for several reasons.

First, we believe imposing a minimum number of required signatures on a county-by-county basis would make qualifying an initiative petition unreasonably difficult and/or excessively expensive. If the committee is interested in a geography-based signature requirement, we encourage you to consider the proposal contemplated by HJR 11, which calls for a more reasonable congressional district-based requirement.

Second, and most concerning, HJR 3 seeks to prohibit individuals who are not eligible to vote in the state from "directly or indirectly mak(ing) contributions in connection with an initiative measure or to influence the outcome of an election on an initiative measure." We believe this is an unacceptable limitation on political speech and likely violates free speech rights protected by both the U.S. Constitution and the Oregon State Constitution. OBI vigorously opposes any attempts to limit these rights.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to reject HJR 3 in favor of more balanced reforms that are consistent with our state's pioneering legacy of supporting direct democracy and ballot access.

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