

To: Senate Committee on Rules

Fr: Eric Winters

Re: Opposition to SJR 30

I offer my opposition to SJR 30. I have lived in Oregon for almost my entire life. Over the last 50 years I've gone from K12 to college to law school, and now my kids are venturing off to college and it's all been in this state. I've been mostly proud to be an Oregonian. I don't always agree with our political decisions, but I'm happy that we have channels to bring about change directly. Even when it misfires (and it certainly does) we are better off with an initiative process than without it.

How many of the conservatives on this committee remember Don McIntire? Before Measure 5 was passed in 1990, the property tax system in Oregon was oppressive. Had it been left to the legislature, property taxes would never have been limited. If the requirements of SJR 30 had been in place, Measure 5 would never have been brought before voters. The effort needed in time and resources for mounting a signature drive has always been onerous, but SJR 30 would effectively double the resources needed to qualify to the ballot. It would leave the process available to only the deepest of pockets.

I'm not in a political party anymore, but I support issues that protect individual rights and increase government accountability (hopefully while limiting it). Other than the landmark charter schools bill, I am hardpressed to identify a single major policy advancement over the last forty years that wasn't presented to the voters in a ballot measure. Passing SJR 30 will ensure that nothing will ever make it to the ballot in Oregon without the support of the public employee unions.

Some conservatives may view this as the only means of avoiding liberal measures (and it would limit some of them), but it would also hand all the power to the legislature in the process. Oregon's legislature is bright blue and likely to remain so for many years to come. SJR 30 is not some mutual disarmament between the major parties in the hope of restraining fringe politics, it's a complete surrender to the political status quo. Strangling the initiative is just eating your seed corn.

Please vote NO.

Eric Winters