



OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage

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Senate Committee on Rules
RE: SJR 30 Support

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Bonham, Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Hunters Association (OHA) is Oregon's largest state-centric hunter conservation organization, representing over 12,000 sportsmen and women throughout 26 chapters in the state. Our mission is 'to protect Oregon's wildlife, habitat, and hunting heritage' and we strongly support science-based wildlife and habitat management.

OHA supports SJR 30 as a good governance bill that strikes the balance needed to strengthen Oregon's initiative petition system while maintaining the process for Oregonians who want to use this form of governance.

Oregon has a unique history with the initiate petition process. In 1902, Oregonians overwhelming approved the initiative and referendum process, creating what became known as the "Oregon System". Between 1902 and 1968, there were several changes made to the process, however, no substantial updates or changes have been made in the last 57 years.

In that time, not only has Oregon's population more than doubled, but voter registration and participation has also increased. In 1968 Oregon's population was 2,050,900 with 47% of Oregonians registered to vote (971,851) and 40% voter participation in the 1968 election (824,562). By contrast, Oregon's current population is 4,272,371 and the most recent election saw 76% of the current population registered to vote (3,257,425) with 54% participated in the election (2,308,256).

It is time to update the "Oregon System" to reflect the changes in state demographics and voter participation. Without these threshold updates, Oregon is at risk of a weakened initiative system with troubling consequences.

In recent years, several ballot measures have caused detrimental impacts to the State, not the least of which being Measure 110, which had to be overturned by the legislature after just three years. In 2024, Measure 118 gained the ballot after being primarily financed by out-of-state investors interested in making Oregon the testing ground for basic universal income. Such a measure would have had major effects on Oregon's economy, legislative budgeting process, and businesses.

Oregon's low signature requirement, and lack of geographic distribution requirement, have been noted by certain measure proponents as a 'low bar' for placing an initiative on the ballot. In fact, only three states have a lower threshold for signature requirements that also do not have a distribution requirement.

Including Oregon, twenty-six states use the initiative petition system to some degree, whether that is for statutory changes, constitutional changes, or vetos. The requirements for the number of signatures needed to gain the ballot vary, ranging from 2% to 15%, along with the metric used to calculate the number of signatures. The table below breaks down the percentage required, the metric used to calculate the signature requirement, and, in the sixteen states that require geographic distribution of signatures, what geographic metric is used.

Breakdown of Initiative petition process by state

State	Percentage Needed	Signature metric	Geographic metric
WY	15% statutory	Number of votes in the most recent general election	Counties
AZ	10% statutory/15% constitutional	Number of votes for Governor in the last gubernatorial election	
MS	12% constitutional	Number of votes for Governor in the last gubernatorial election	CD
NV	10% statutory/10% constitutional	Number of votes in the most recent general election	CD
ME	10% statutory	Number of votes for Governor in the last gubernatorial election	
AK	10% statutory	Number of votes in the most recent general election	House districts
NM	10% veto only	Number of votes in the most recent general election	Counties
OK	8% statutory / 15% constitutional	Number of votes for Governor in the last gubernatorial election	
MI	8% statutory / 10% constitutional	Number of votes for Governor in the last gubernatorial election	
AR	8% statutory / 10% constitutional	Number of votes for Governor in the last gubernatorial election	Counties
FL	8% constitutional	Number of votes in the last election where presidential electors were chosen	CD
IL	8% constitutional	Number of votes for Governor in the last gubernatorial election	
UT	8% statutory	Number of votes in the most recent general election	Senate districts
WA	8% statutory	Number of votes for Governor in the last gubernatorial election	
NE	7% statutory / 10% constitutional	Number of registered voters	Counties
OH	6% statutory / 10% constitutional	Number of votes for Governor in the last gubernatorial election	Counties
OR	6% statutory/8% constitutional	Number of votes for Governor in the last gubernatorial election	
ID	6% statutory	Number of votes in the most recent general election	Legislative districts
SD	5% statutory/10% constitutional	Number of votes for Governor in the last gubernatorial election	
MT	5% statutory/10% constitutional	Number of votes for Governor in the last gubernatorial election	Legislative districts
CA	5% statutory / 8% constitutional	Number of votes for Governor in the last gubernatorial election	
MI	5% statutory / 8% constitutional	Number of votes for Governor in the last gubernatorial election	CD
CO	5% statutory / 5% constitutional	Number of votes for Secretary of State in the last general election	Senate districts
MD	3% veto only	Number of votes for Governor in the last gubernatorial election	<50% Baltimore City/ single County
MA	3% plus legislative approval	Number of votes for Governor in the last gubernatorial election	Counties
ND	2% statutory / 4% constitutional	Population of the state at the last federal decennial census	

SJR 30 provides a balanced solution to protecting the “Oregon System” that does not take the initiative petition process out of the hands of Oregonians wishing to participate in governance.

The moderate increase in the total number of signatures required aligns Oregon with the national average among states using the initiative petition process.

Using congressional districts as the geographic metric for distribution of signatures provides areas of equal population to ensure the ‘one person, one vote’ rule is upheld. This model increases regional participation in the process while maintaining equitable, population-based balance.

Acknowledging that the cost of signature gathering is higher outside the Portland area, the utilization of congressional districts also balances the amount of travel needed to fulfill the required signature minimum in each district. The arrangement of Oregon’s congressional

districts, with four districts touching the tri-county Portland area, are such that the remaining two districts can be readily accessed at major urban hubs along the Interstate 5 corridor.

SJR 30 is about the respectful balance between strengthening and protecting the “Oregon System” while not creating impediments for Oregonians who want to use this form of governance.

Thank you for your time,
Amy Patrick
Policy Director