

I stand in **complete opposition** to Senate Joint Resolution 30, a perilous assault on Oregonians’ sacred initiative rights. This measure, proposing to amend Article IV, Section 1 of the Oregon Constitution, raises signature thresholds for initiative laws to 8% and constitutional amendments to 10%, mandating equal distribution across congressional districts. It threatens the “free and equal” elections promised by Article II, Section 1 and the people’s power reserved under Article IV, Section 1.

I urge its rejection for these grave reasons:

SJR 30 inflicts profound inequity and jeopardizes elections by hiking signature requirements from 6% to 8% (150,833 votes) and 8% to 10% (188,541 votes), based on 2022 gubernatorial totals. This 33% and 25% surge disproportionately burdens rural Oregonians—e.g., in the 2nd District’s vast expanses—where fewer voters must muster equal numbers as urban powerhouses like the 1st District. The equal district mandate demands ~25,139 and ~31,424 signatures per district, forcing rural areas to overperform (8-10% of their electorate) while urban centers coast (6% or less), skewing influence westward. **This violates the Fourteenth Amendment’s equal protection**, as upheld in *Reclaim Idaho v. Denney* (169 Idaho 202, 2021), which **struck down** a similar district quota **for diluting rural voices**.

Financially, SJR 30 cripples’ grassroots efforts. Gathering 188,541 signatures across Oregon’s 98,381 square miles demands wealth urban elites can wield, not rural or working-class petitioners. The U.S. Supreme Court in *Buckley v. American Constitutional Law Foundation* (525 U.S. 182, 1999) protected petitioning as a First Amendment right, **voiding barriers that favor the affluent—SJR 30 flouts this by pricing out the marginalized**.

This resolution guts Oregon’s 1902 legacy of direct democracy, tilting power to urban interests and silencing rural concerns like timber or water rights. It undermines Article IV, Section 1’s intent—power “reserved to the people”—and risks legal doom under precedents like Reclaim Idaho.

SJR 30 introduces inequity and unfairness by:

- 1.) Raising signature thresholds (8% and 10%), disproportionately burdening rural and low-resource Oregonians.
- 2.) Mandating equal district distribution, skewing power to urban areas and diluting rural voices.
- 3.) Increasing financial and logistical barriers, favoring wealthy petitioners over grassroots efforts.
- 4.) Undermining Article IV, Section 1’s promise of accessible direct democracy, risking exclusion of marginalized communities.
- 5.) These changes threaten the “free and equal” election principle (Article II, Section 1) and the people’s reserved power (Article IV, Section 1), creating an uneven playing field across Oregon’s diverse regions and socioeconomic groups. If enacted, it will face legal challenges akin to Reclaim Idaho.

Vote no to preserve our equal voice, not entrench inequity.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Gunter
Wasco County Oregon