

Submitter: Larry M. Gunter

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SJR30

As a Wasco County small business owner and voter in Oregon's rural 2nd District, I OPPOSE Senate Joint Resolution 30, amending Article IV, Section 1 to raise initiative signatures to 8% for laws (150,833) and 10% for amendments (188,541), with equal district quotas (~25,139 each). It threatens our "free and equal" elections (Article II, Section 1) and livelihoods. I urge a "NO" vote.

SJR 30 burdens rural voters like me hardest, demanding 8-10% of my district's sparse 413,000 voters match urban Portland's 6% (~600,000 voters). This skews ballot access, favoring city agendas like transit over rural needs like agricultural subsidies. Reclaim Idaho v. Denney (169 Idaho 202, 2021) voided similar quotas for this inequity—my voice shouldn't count less.

Businesses, reliant on initiatives for tax relief, the 33% and 25% threshold hikes and travel costs across vast distances (e.g., Wasco to Malheur, 200+ miles) are crippling. With Wasco's median income (\$50,000) dwarfed by Portland's (\$75,000), I can't compete with urban firms hiring canvassers at \$2-\$5 per signature (Buckley v. ACLF, 525 U.S. 182, 1999, struck such barriers as First Amendment violations). This rigs elections against small businesses, limiting our influence.

SJR 30 guts Article IV, Section 1's people's power, tilting democracy toward urban wealth and threatening rural election outcomes.

Vote no to preserve fairness for all Oregonians!

Sincerely,
Larry M.Gunter
The Dalles (Wasco County)