

April 10, 2025

Position on Bills at 2025 Session of Oregon Legislature:

SB 1180: Oppose



The Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network (COIN) is a coalition of over 50 local Indivisible groups throughout Oregon that cooperate and amplify their joint efforts to advance important federal and state legislation and engage with elected officials to promote causes for the benefit of all Oregonians.

COIN opposes SB 1180, which would require the Secretary of State to submit to the Legislative Assembly, by November 1 of each odd-numbered year, a list of each prospective statewide initiative petition that has been filed for the next general election, including the text, ballot title and total number of signatures gathered for each prospective petition.

The Secretary of State already compiles and publishes that information on a monthly basis on its Initiative and Referendum Log. The number of signatures now reported is the number obtained by paid circulators. There is no way for the Secretary of State to know how many signatures have been gathered by volunteers, as those sheets are ordinarily in the hands of volunteers, who need not turn them in to the chief petitioners until the deadline for final submittal approaches (July of the election year).

SB 1180 could be interpreted as requiring the Secretary of State to require chief petitioners to report volunteer-gathered signatures every month, which would greatly hamper volunteer signature gathering efforts. It is already difficult to train volunteers on complying with the myriad of hypertechnical rules that Secretaries of State and this Legislature have imposed on the initiative process since 2000. Requiring volunteers to turn in their signatures on a monthly schedule to the chief petitioners would probably cause some to cease gathering—too much hassle. Also, there would need to be some enforcement mechanism to force the monthly turn-ins of signatures gathered by volunteers. What would that be? Probably disqualification of all signatures on volunteer sheets that were not timely reported back to the chief petitioners. This interpretation of the bill would also significantly increase the administrative requirements on volunteer chief petitioners. What purpose this would serve is a mystery.

The bill also requires the secretary to provide updates of this information to the Oregon Legislature during the first week of December, January and February. Again, the Secretary of State already compiles and publishes the information on a monthly basis. The bill then states that “legislative leadership may request” various analyses from the Legislative Fiscal Officer, the Legislative Revenue Officer, and Legislative Counsel. There is no need for a law to accomplish that, since legislative leadership can request such analyses anyway. The same is true for the part of the bill that says that “Legislative leadership shall use the analyses provided under subsection (4) of this section to determine whether the state would benefit from holding public hearings on

one or more of the prospective petitions submitted under subsection (2) or (3) of this section . . .”

In sum, this bill is entirely unnecessary, if interpreted reasonably. If interpreted expansively, it accomplishes nothing other than making it more difficult to gather initiative signatures by volunteers.

Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network (COIN)

Daniel Meek

authorized testifier

dan@meek.net 503-293-9021