

Submitter: Michael Madlener  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3390

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 3390 A, as outlined in the preliminary language and summary from the Senate Committee on Rules.

This measure proposes to create a joint legislative committee responsible for preparing the ballot title and explanatory statement for any amendment to the Oregon Constitution referred to the ballot by the Eighty-third Legislative Assembly, or for any Act referred by the Legislature or by referendum petition. While the stated intent may be to streamline the process, I am deeply concerned that this approach undermines transparency, fairness, and the independence of the ballot measure process.

My specific points of opposition are as follows:

1. Lack of Independence: Assigning the drafting of ballot titles and explanatory statements to a legislative committee, rather than an independent or bipartisan body, risks politicizing the language that voters see. This could result in biased or misleading summaries that favor the interests of the Legislature rather than the public.
2. Insufficient Oversight: Although the measure allows for judicial review by the Oregon Supreme Court if an elector is dissatisfied, this is not a substitute for an independent, neutral process at the outset. Citizens should not have to rely on litigation to ensure fair and accurate ballot language.
3. Emergency Clause: The inclusion of an emergency clause, making the measure effective immediately upon passage, limits public input and debate. This is especially concerning for changes affecting the fundamental rights and processes of direct democracy.

In summary, HB 3390 A threatens the integrity of Oregon's ballot measure process by centralizing control of critical ballot language in a legislative committee and reducing opportunities for public scrutiny. I urge you to reconsider this approach and instead support a process that prioritizes independence, transparency, and fairness for all Oregon voters.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Madlener  
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