

Submitter: ANDREW HALL
On Behalf Of: Oregon citizens
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3390

To the Honorable Members of the Oregon Legislature,

I strongly oppose HB3390, which grants the majority party authority to craft ballot titles and explanatory statements for citizen-led referenda and legislative measures. This bill undermines the democratic process, erodes public trust, and tilts the electoral playing field in favor of the majority party, threatening the fairness and transparency Oregonians expect from their elections.

HB3390 disrupts the established process for creating ballot titles, which has historically aimed for impartiality through oversight by the Secretary of State and input from diverse stakeholders. By allowing a joint legislative committee, dominated by the majority party, to write these titles, the bill introduces a clear risk of partisan bias. Ballot titles are critical—they shape voters' first impressions of a measure. A biased or misleading title can sway public opinion before voters even read the details. This power grab risks manipulating voter perception to favor the majority party's agenda, especially for citizen-led referenda designed to challenge legislative actions.

The bill's timing raises further concerns. Introduced as a placeholder to "study elections," it has morphed into a significant overhaul of the referendum process without adequate public debate. This lack of transparency fuels suspicion that HB3390 is a strategic move to shield unpopular policies from voter scrutiny, particularly as citizen-led referenda gain traction to repeal controversial laws. Oregon's initiative system is a cornerstone of direct democracy, empowering citizens to hold lawmakers accountable. HB3390 weakens this system by allowing the majority party to frame the narrative, potentially discouraging voter participation and distorting outcomes.

Moreover, the bill's emergency declaration is unjustified. Declaring an emergency to fast-track HB3390 bypasses thorough public input and deliberation, which are essential for legislation impacting the democratic process. This rushed approach suggests an intent to consolidate power rather than serve the public good. Oregonians deserve a transparent process where ballot titles are crafted neutrally, free from partisan influence.

I urge you to reject HB3390 and preserve the integrity of Oregon's elections. The current system, while imperfect, prioritizes fairness through independent oversight. Allowing the majority party to control ballot titles risks eroding voter trust and undermining the democratic principles that define our state. Let's protect the right of

Oregonians to engage in an unbiased electoral process.

Sincerely,A Concerned Oregon Citizen