

Submitter: Nathan Miller  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Special Committee On Referendum Petition  
2026-302  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1599

Moving the election date for Referendum Petition 2026-302 to the May primary is a direct affront to the more than 250,000 Oregonians who signed this petition with the clear expectation that it would be decided in November. When these citizens engaged in the democratic process, they did so under the understanding that a referendum of this magnitude—affecting transportation taxes and fees—would be put to the broadest possible electorate during the general election. By overriding the intent of over a quarter-million voters, the legislature is effectively changing the rules in the middle of the game to favor a lower-turnout environment.

Furthermore, a primary election typically sees significantly lower participation than a general election. Shifting this vote to May 19th risks disenfranchising thousands of voters—particularly independents and unaffiliated Oregonians—who traditionally wait for the November ballot to weigh in on major policy shifts. The legislature should respect the verified will of the people and maintain the November 3, 2026, election date, ensuring that the final decision is made when voter engagement and transparency are at their peak.