

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

Testimony in Opposition to SB 1599

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I submit this testimony in opposition to SB 1599, which would move the election date for the portions of Chapter 1, Oregon Laws 2025 (special session), referred to the voters by Referendum Petition 2026-302, to the May 19, 2026 primary election.

The citizens who signed Referendum Petition 2026-302 did so with the clear understanding that the measure would appear on the November general election ballot. That was the intent of the petition, and that is what thousands of Oregonians supported with their signatures. Changing the election date after the fact undermines the purpose and spirit of the referendum process.

The referendum process exists to give the people a direct voice in their government. When citizens take the time and effort to organize, collect signatures, and qualify a measure for the ballot, that effort should be respected — not altered in a way that changes the terms under which support was gathered.

Many of the individuals who signed this petition are working Oregonians. They are small business owners, tradespeople, parents, and employees who cannot easily take time away from work to travel to the Capitol and testify in person. Public hearings are often held during normal working hours, when many citizens are on the job. These are not professional activists; they are ordinary people who participated in the democratic process in good faith.

Moving this vote to an earlier election date disregards the expectations of those citizens. They did not sign for a May ballot. They signed for a November ballot.

I respectfully urge you to honor the will and intent of the voters who exercised their constitutional right to referendum. Please allow this measure to appear on the November ballot, as petitioned.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tony B