



NEWS

Oregon Legislature - House Democratic Caucus

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Citizens Initiative Review Commission Extended

Everyday Oregonians will continue to provide input to fellow voters through special review process of state ballot measures

SALEM – Everyday Oregon citizens would get the chance to express their views on pending ballot initiatives through the Citizens’ Initiative Review Commission after the Oregon House today passed legislation to extend the life of the commission for another two years. No state funds are used to finance the commission. House Bill 2634 passed 36-22.

Co-Speaker Arnie Roblan sponsored the bill along with eight other House Democrats. The bill continues the commission established two years ago, which took an in-depth look at upcoming ballot measures, analyzed the arguments for and against and made a recommendation in the voter’s pamphlet to their fellow citizens.

HB 2634 has been a major legislative priority for Co-Speaker Arnie Roblan since 2009.

“After hearing testimony from previous Citizens’ Initiative Review panel members, it became clear to me that this is a valuable process that helps to inform not only panel participants, but also to better inform all Oregonians about important state issues,” said Roblan (D-Coos Bay/Florence). “I applaud the efforts of the Citizens’ Initiative Review.”

Under the bill, the Commission would select between 18 and 24 Oregonians from across the state. Those panelists meet for five days to hear arguments from both sides, research the issue and its financial impacts on the state, and prepare a “citizens” statement that appears in the voter’s pamphlet.

“Voters get lots of targeted campaign ads to vote for one side or the other. This gives them one additional third-party source of information that will be timely, accurate and fair. Encouraging more and better informed voters will only help our political process as we move forward,” said State Rep. Nancy Nathanson (D-Eugene) who carried the bill on the House floor “I heard very positive reviews from the process two years ago and am very glad to support this legislation.”

Co-Speaker Roblan added, “Listening to real Oregonians testify on access to fair, impartial and non-partisan information convinced me that this legislation would bring accountability to the initiative process.”

Two of the founding members of the CIR said they were pleased the bill moved forward.

“As voters, we all do our best to sort through the political noise to make informed decisions,” said Elliot Shuford. “With the Citizens’ Initiative Review, we will have a powerful new tool to easily find reliable and clear information about ballot measures.”

Tyrone Reitman, another of the group’s founders agreed: “This is truly one of those uniquely innovative ideas that could only come from a great state like Oregon. The Oregon Legislature on the verge of making something very special that the voters of Oregon will be proud of for years to come.”

HB 2634 now moves to the Senate for consideration.

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