



2011 Citizens' Initiative Review Legislation: House Bill 2634

In 2009, the Oregon Legislative Assembly passed HB 2895 in order to determine if the Citizens' Initiative Review (CIR) process would provide voters with trustworthy, high-quality and useful information about ballot measures. During the 2010, two measures were reviewed by independent panels of randomly selected Oregon voters, as outlined by HB 2895, with the results of their evaluations placed as prominent new pages in the official Voters' Pamphlet.

As stipulated in HB 2895 (2009) an independent evaluation was conducted as part of this one-time 'pilot' of the Citizens' Initiative Review. Funded by a \$218K research grant from the National Science Foundation, an independent team of prominent researchers evaluated the impacts of the CIR process, and concluded the program to be a very successful, and impactful method of providing voters with information about ballot measures.

HB 2634 proposes continuing the Citizens' Initiative Review process as an ongoing resource to Oregon voters. HB 2634 creates a state commission to provide robust, visible oversight of the CIR, and ensures the Citizens' Initiative Review (CIR) continues to be published in a prominent new place in the voter's pamphlet, without a fiscal impact.

- **HB 2634 contains the same provisions as HB 2895 (2009) for running a fair, high quality review (such as randomly-selected panelists assembled in a demographically-balanced panel);**
- **Places the results of the Citizens' Initiative Review in the same prominent position in the voter's pamphlet as outlined in HB 2895 (2009)**
- **Establishes an 11 member executive commission to oversee the Citizens' Initiative Review. The commission is composed of former CIR panelists, former CIR moderators and former '5th members' of explanatory committees. The commission has rule-making authority to oversee and ensure implementation of the CIR**
- **Creates a 'Citizens' Initiative Review Fund' for the commission which is restricted to individual donations, nonprofit foundations;**
- **HAS NO FISCAL IMPACT but continues to provide this great public service for voters**

Advisory Board:

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Phil Keisling
Andi Miller
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Harvey Platt
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Citizens' Initiative Review Process

Citizens' Initiative Review Panels consist of 18 -24 randomly-selected registered voters that are demographically-balanced to reflect the state's electorate. Demographics must at a minimum include: A) the location of the elector's residence, (B) the elector's party affiliation, if any, (C) the elector's voting history, and (D) the elector's age. In addition, demographic variables including, gender, ethnicity, educational attainment, and income will be incorporated to the extent practicable and legally permissible.

Panelists are given a per diem of \$150 a day and travel, lodging, and meal expenses are covered by the convening organization to ensure widespread participation.

For each ballot measure evaluated, a separate panel will be convened.

The Review process is five consecutive days in length and is moderated by two highly trained professionals.

The resulting "Citizens Statement" will be printed in the Voters' Pamphlet, and may include summary positions for and against the measure, a summary of key findings about the measure, and a summary of additional fiscal and policy considerations -- all at 250 words or less each.

What are people saying about the Citizens' Initiative Review?

"After seeing this process first-hand, it is clear that this citizen deliberation holds great potential to provide voters with new and important information." - **Kate Brown, Secretary of State**

"After hearing testimony from previous Citizens' Initiative Review panel members, it became clear to me that this was a valuable process that helped to inform not only panel participants, but, through them, to better inform all Oregonians about important state issues. I applaud the efforts of the Citizens' Initiative Review."

-**State Representative Arnie Roblan, Co-Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives**

"This bill [Citizens' Initiative Review Pilot - HB 2895], it is an opportunity to get more people engaged in the process, to think about, and to come to informed conclusions when they cast their ballots. If knowledge and understanding an engagement are inappropriate in a democratic process, then a "no" vote on this bill would be appropriate. They are totally appropriate in a democratic process. Mr. President, I urge an "aye" vote."

- **State Senator, Frank Morse** (R-Albany) Senate floor debate, June 16, 2009

"Voters in Oregon need a clear, useful and nonpartisan source for information and evaluation of statewide ballot measures. OBA supports making the Citizens' Initiative Review an ongoing public service for Oregon voters."

- **The Oregon Business Association**

"Oregon has long been an innovator in the area of direct democracy. This bill represents another example of how our state continues to encourage and support citizen engagement in the process of governing."

- **State Senator Richard Devlin** (D-Tualatin)

"The League of Women Voters believes that the Citizens' Initiative Review is a real plus for improving civic engagement in Oregon. It serves the dual purpose of providing invaluable information about initiatives while giving citizens a real voice in the democratic process." - **Marge Easley, President of the League of Women Voters of Oregon**

"Healthy Democracy Oregon is one of the best things to happen to Oregon in the past 20 years."

- **Daily Astorian Editorial Board**

"Oregon, which introduced the initiative, may be on the verge of pioneering a way of improving it."

- **Register Guard Editorial Board**

"This is a great idea that merits enactment and eventual extension into the biennial election process."

- **East Oregonian Editorial Board**

"The project's goal is to provide voters with more balanced information than the yes-no statements in voters pamphlets. This strikes us as a good idea, good for democracy and deserving of backing."

- **Hillsboro Argus Editorial Board**

"The proponents and opponents' goal, as the CIR notes, is to influence voters, not necessarily inform. The CIR hopes to change that with reliable and clear information. Watch for the Citizens Statements in the Voters Pamphlet this fall. They'll be the most objective analyses of the issues we'll be voting on."

- **La Grande Observer Editorial Board**

"Oregon is pioneering an innovative and empowering reform with the Citizens' Initiative Review. It will help voters cut through the campaign rhetoric to find clear and credible information when casting their ballot."

- **Phil Keisling, former Oregon Secretary of State**

"Bringing more voices into the ballot initiative process is always a good thing. The Citizens' Initiative Review is also cutting edge in seeking greater involvement of the average citizen through randomly selecting participants, similar to the way juries are chosen." - **Paul Jacob, President of the Citizens in Charge Foundation**