



Fact Sheet

About the Citizens' Initiative Review

The Citizens' Initiative Review (CIR) is an innovative proposal for providing voters with comprehensive, peer-based evaluations of statewide ballot measures. Each CIR engages a panel of 24 Oregonians in a public review of a measure on the ballot. These registered voters—selected at random and balanced to represent the state electorate—participate in transparent and balanced hearings. During these hearings, pro and con advocates present their case, and policy experts provide background information at the request of the panel. After several days of testimony and deliberation, the panel members present their findings in a 'Citizens' Statement' that is published in the Oregon Voters' Pamphlet.

Following a successful 'field test' of the Review process on Ballot Measure 58 in 2008, Healthy Democracy Oregon worked with a bipartisan team of legislators to pass House Bill 2895 during the 2009 legislative session. HB 2895 allows for an official pilot of the Review process to be convened on 1-3 measures for the 2010 general election. A 'Citizens' Statement' will be published as a prominent new page in the statewide Voters' Pamphlet for each measure reviewed. The purpose of the 2010 pilot of the Citizens' Initiative Review is to provide Oregonians with an opportunity to use this new source of information, and determine through a rigorous evaluation the utility of the CIR to voters. Recognizing the importance of the CIR, the National Science Foundation announced an award of \$218,000 to the CIR Evaluation team in December, 2009.

About Healthy Democracy Oregon

Healthy Democracy Oregon is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization with a mission to promote innovative, deliberative reforms to resolve tough political issues. By engaging citizens in reasoned, balanced discussions about the critical issues facing our state, HDO strives to increase accountability and citizen-engagement in the initiative process. HDO was founded in 2007, by Oregonians Elliot Shuford and Tyrone Reitman. More than 30,000 people from around the state have signed on in support of the Citizens' Initiative Review.

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Healthy Democracy Oregon Timeline

2007 – HDO is founded and legislation is drafted for the Citizens' Initiative Review. Outreach reveals interest in the process, and a desire to see a 'field test' of the CIR conducted.

2008 – A successful 'field test' of the Citizens' Initiative Review is conducted on Ballot Measure 58. The process is evaluated by the League of Women Voters of Oregon. Secretary of State Kate Brown suggests 'pilot' legislation as the next step forward.

2009 – House Bill 2895 is passed by the Oregon Legislature, allowing for up to 3 Citizens' Initiative Reviews to be conducted with the results to be placed as prominent new pages in the statewide Voters' Pamphlet. The National Science Foundation grants \$218k for evaluation of the 2010 CIR Pilot.

2010 – With your help, three Citizens' Initiative Reviews will be conducted and evaluated, proving that there's a better way to provide information to voters, and creating a healthier democracy in Oregon!

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**

"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 Senate Majority Leader 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**

"HB 2895 follows up on an experiment from last fall's election. Healthy Democracy Oregon convened 23 registered voters to examine Measure 58, dealing with non-English learners. The panelists created a statement summarizing their views after hearing from proponents, opponents and a variety of experts. That was a worthy process, but the impact will be greater by having a page of results published in the Voters Pamphlet, as the legislation allows."

- **Editorial by the Statesman Journal**

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

- **East Oregonian Editorial Board**

"The Citizens' Initiative Reviews provide a model of citizen-empowering democracy-in-action."

- **Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center**

"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

"Informed public participation is enhanced by the Citizens Review process, and we commend Healthy Democracy Oregon for conducting a valuable evaluation of the effectiveness of this tool in helping to analyze and explain ballot measures to Oregon voters."

- **Janice Thompson, Executive Director, Common Cause Oregon**

"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**

"The creation of these panels complements Oregon's tradition of citizen engagement in the political process."

- **State Senator Rick Metsger** (D-Welches)

"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."

- **Susan Gordanier, Hillsboro Argus Editorial**

"It is hard to find reliable, even-handed information on ballot measures. Citizens' Initiative Review can help fill that gap, resulting in better-informed voters and electoral outcomes that are more likely to match the public interest."

- **State Representative Ben Cannon** (D-Portland)