



**Testimony of Kimberly McCullough, Legislative Director
In Support of HB 3422
House Committee on Rules
April 6, 2017**

Chair Williamson and Members of the Committee:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon¹ supports HB 3422, which would improve the process for observation of the process of signature verification of initiative and referendum petitions relating to state measures. As a nonpartisan organization dedicated to preservation and enhancement of civil liberties and civil rights, the ACLU of Oregon supports efforts that further core principles of democracy.

The citizen ballot initiative process ensures Oregonians can directly impact state laws. As such an important part of Oregon's democracy, it is essential that the process be transparent and fair.

HB 3422 will increase transparency and fairness by improving the rights of citizens who wish to observe the signature verification process. HB 3422 will also create a complaint, appeals and enforcement process for observers, creating even greater protection of the rights of individuals who wish to engage in this process.

The transparency and fairness promoted by this bill will in turn encourage trust in the legitimacy of ballot initiatives, even when people disagree with the outcome. In other words, ensuring the public has access to observe the signature verification process builds confidence in the legitimacy of the outcome. This legitimacy increases participation in the entire initiative process, and results in a stronger, healthier democracy.

We understand that there are amendments to clarify that the right to observe signature verification is open to any elector registered to vote in this state. We support such amendments, as we want to ensure that individuals who are not affiliated with a political party are allowed equal access to this process.

We also understand that amendments may be needed in order to address some concerns that have been raised about the involvement of the Attorney General's office in resolution of complaints. We do believe that a process for appeal is appropriate, but understand that this process may need to occur without the involvement of the Attorney General. We look forward to seeing amendments that resolve this issue.

The ACLU of Oregon urges you to support HB 3422. Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns.

¹ The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon (ACLU of Oregon) is a nonprofit organization with more than 37,000 members in the State of Oregon.