



For Immediate Release

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**DRAZAN CHAMPIONS FEDERAL LAWSUIT TO DEFEND THE VOICE OF OREGONIANS
CHALLENGING VOTERS' PAMPHLET RULES THAT SILENCE DISABLED, LOW-INCOME VOTERS**

SALEM, Ore. – Today, **Senator Christine Drazan (R-Canby)** submitted a declaration in support of motion for Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) in a federal lawsuit filed with the United States District Court for the District of Oregon challenging a state election rule that prevents low-income and disabled Oregonians from submitting arguments to the official state Voters' Pamphlet. Joining Senator Drazan in submitting declarations in support of the TRO are **Senator David Brock Smith (R-Port Orford)**, **Representative Shelly Boshart Davis (R-Albany)**, **Rep. Ed Diehl (R-Scio)** and **Rep. Matt Bunch (R-Canby)**.

The federal lawsuit, *Mary Martin v. Tobias Read*, was filed on behalf of Mary Martin, a 73-year-old Klamath Falls resident who uses a wheelchair and lives on Social Security. Martin was a key volunteer in the campaign to refer costly portions of House Bill 3991—a \$4.3 billion transportation tax and fee hike—to the voters. The referendum qualified for the ballot after more than 250,000 signatures were submitted by Oregonians seeking a vote in the November 2026 General Election.

The lawsuit argues that the recently passed Senate Bill 1599 imposes an unconstitutional barrier to political participation by requiring citizens who want to publish arguments in the state Voters' Pamphlet to either pay a \$1,200 fee or gather 500 signatures within a matter of days—a requirement the complaint says is impossible for many disabled and low-income voters.

Republican gubernatorial candidate **Senator Christine Drazan**, who submitted a declaration in support of motion for Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) criticized the rule as fundamentally unfair. "Once 250,000 Oregonians signed the petition referring Tina Kotek's costly taxes to the November ballot, they took control of this measure and deserve their day in court," said **Senator Drazan**. "This is about continuing the fight to defend the rights of Oregonians," **Drazan** added. "When the government creates rules that silence everyone but those with money or power, there must be a reckoning."

As a result of SB 1599, the timeline to submit arguments for the Voters' Pamphlet was drastically shortened, resulting in individuals having only a few days to meet the fee or signature requirement before the *March 12 filing deadline*.

For Martin, that effectively means her voice cannot be heard. “I helped gather hundreds of signatures so voters could decide this issue themselves,” **Martin** said. “Now the state is telling me that unless I can pay \$1,200 or collect hundreds more signatures in just a few days—something my disability makes impossible—I’m not allowed to share my argument with voters.”

The lawsuit claims the rule violates the *First Amendment*, the *Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment*, and *Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act* by creating a wealth-based and disability-based barrier to core political speech.

In a Temporary Restraining Order filing accompanying the lawsuit, **attorneys** wrote, “Ironically, the Secretary of State warned the Legislature twice in writing that their timeline would eliminate any realistic free-speech alternative. A week later, the secretary is now enforcing a rule that permanently silences Mary Martin and thousands of other low-income and disabled voters just like her. This is not an abstract constitutional dispute. The state of Oregon is telling some of its most dedicated citizens that their voice will not be heard. In the instant case a woman who literally wheeled herself into the fight to give other voters a voice, will not be heard because of her financial status and disability.”

The complaint asks the federal court to issue an injunction allowing Martin and other similarly situated citizens to submit arguments to the Voters’ Pamphlet *without paying the \$1,200 fee or gathering 500 signatures*. In the alternative, the lawsuit asks the court to prevent the referendum from being moved from the November 2026 ballot to the May 2026 election.

The lawsuit was filed by Fir Law Group and seeks declaratory and injunctive relief to restore access to the Voters’ Pamphlet for disabled and low-income voters across Oregon.

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