

Submitter: Jennifer Reynolds

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Rules

Measure: HB4026

I oppose HB 4026A for the following reasons:

- The bill is probably unconstitutional. This bill restricts the constitutional right to call a referendum. The state can only do that through a constitutional amendment, and not a statute.
- The process has been undemocratic. This provision was amended into a completely different bill in a secretive way - halfway through a short legislative session on a Friday afternoon. Now it's not even clear which committee it's going to and how people can testify. This is no way to make legislation that could limit a constitutional right.
- The bill is retroactive to stop a measure that's already on the May ballot. Ten percent of North Plains voting residents signed a petition to get a referendum on their ballot. This bill would retroactively invalidate the legally exercised will of the people.
- Referenda are hard to bring and rare, but important to be able to use for bad cases. It's extremely difficult to get 10% of registered voters' signatures in 30 days, and referenda will only be used for the worst cases. In North Plains, there was limited public engagement {give examples from your experience} and it would be the biggest UGB expansion by percentage in the state's history.
- Referenda are not a threat to housing strategies inside UGBs, since referenda can't be brought for localized decisions like siting a supermarket or zoning changes.