

05/08/2019

The Honorable Representative Paul Holvey,  
Chair House Committee on Rules, Members Re:  
Testimony in Support of HB 3310

Dear Chair Holvey, and Members of the Committee

Our names are Eric Richardson and Pablo Alvarez, we are writing to you representing the NAACP of Eugene and Springfield. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 3310.

We support HB 3310 and believe you should to because we deeply understand the history of voter and electoral suppression in this nation. As the National NAACP played a crucial role in the implementation of the National Voting Rights Act, we believe we have the duty to do everything possible to pass HB 3310 locally.

HB 3310 Oregon Voting Rights Act (OVRA) would help ensure that voting systems implemented by Oregon's school districts, education service districts, and community colleges align with the National Voting Rights Act (NVRA). The Oregon Voting Rights Act (OVRA) is a bill to help ensure that every voter has an equal opportunity to elect the candidate of their, his or her choice. OVRA strengthens democracy by creating a community-driven process that empowers local governments and community to ensure that all communities have a meaningful voice in local elections. It would establish a process that ensures communities of color and other underrepresented communities are heard, and represented in government. Communities should be able to choose voting systems that work for them.

The OVRA is important to our organization as we continue to empower our communities to be involved in local politics. Local democracy is strongest when all voices of the community are actively listened to. However, as demographics in our state have rapidly changed, our electoral systems have not had an opportunity to intentionally include the voices that have historically been marginalized. The opportunity to include those voices are now here and its imperative that we act decisively. As democratic institutions at the national level seem to deteriorate and continue to be attacked by the highest office, we can send a statement to all oregonians that democratic institutions in the state are here to stay and here to involve everyone. Not just a privileged few.

For the reasons outlined above, I strongly urge you to pass HB 3310. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Eric Richardson, President of NAACP Eugene/Springfield  
Pablo Alvarez, Environmental and Climate Justice Organizer