

HB 4026 Testimony

Opposed

I oppose HB 4026 for the following reasons:

1. HB 4026 does not address the real problem. The real problem is voters are disenchanted with the political parties. The attached spreadsheet shows the changes in Oregon's voter registration over the past three years. Data is from SOS website.
2. The following political parties have net decreased registration since 2016: Democrats, Republicans, Pacific Green and Working Families. However, Non-Affiliated Voters (NAVs) have increased by more than the total increase in registered voters by over 15K. If the trend continues, the NAVs will have more registered voters than the Democrats by the summer of 2020 possibly sooner.
3. The solution: Allow ALL voters to vote in ALL races in the Primary. This is fairest and provides equal access, and cheapest way to resolve the problem. California and Washington have had fully Open Primaries for several years. Voter satisfaction surveys have consistently yielded 60% or higher support among voters. This year several states are looking at the Open Primary method of voting. It will be on the ballot in Florida and Alaska and perhaps other states.
4. Oregon, which has led the nation in many ideas, is well behind the curve. 39 states allow some form of an Open Primary. It is time, nay it is past time, for Oregon to have an Open Primary.
5. There is no need to change the percentage requirement for parties to be accepted as minor parties. This bill wastes the Legislature's time and resources. The real need is to move to an Open Primary system. Then all parties can be treated equally and fairly.