



Brian Liu  
March 4th, 2021  
House Committee on Rules  
RE: Support The Voter Access Act HB 2745

Dear Chair Smith-Warner, Vice Chairs Drazan and Holvey, and members of the Committee:

My name is Brian Liu and I am a Southeast Portland resident. I am testifying today as a Forward Together Action leader in support of HB 2745, the Voter Access Act.

In 2018 I moved to Portland from Olympia, Washington, a fresh undergraduate looking for perspective through community based work. I wanted to talk to people. This led me to Forward Together. Their canvassing work to fight Measure 106 in 2018 seemed like a great way for me to get to know the place I was going to call home.

Canvassing during the elections gave me the opportunity to know the place I was living in in a powerful way. One of the amazing things about Forward Together was how they deliberately focused on low-income POC neighborhoods because these neighborhoods were historically ignored by most campaigning efforts. Voter turnout was low in these communities. This made our engagement even more important.

One of the most intimate experiences during canvassing came when I knocked on a door only to be answered by an older asian woman who didn't speak English. At first, with my limited chinese, our conversation was tense and awkward and it was absolutely clear that she wanted our talk to end as soon as possible. But as the conversation went on, something changed. I told her my family was from Taiwan and that I was a first generation immigrant and we shared feelings of living in two different places and what it means to call oneself an "American". It was clear, even with my limited vocabulary, that we both wanted to feel that where we lived was also our home, with all of the involvement, relationships, and engagement that home involves.

I was probably the first Asian-American canvasser to knock on her door, to ask her questions about her time here, and to engage with her earnestly on what it meant to live in a place so different from what she grew up with and learn to call it home. As I left I realized all of the information I had around the measure was in English. I gave her what I had. I wish I could have left her information in Chinese, information that was useful and thoughtful, information that said, "We see you."



The ability to voluntarily mark demographic data on voter registration is important to me because we need to know who our communities are in order to support them. It's important for us to capture an accurate picture of who our neighbors are and how they identify. Being able to access this information equips us with the knowledge necessary to provide everyone with the tools to vote - to access the information they need in their own language - to make informed decisions about their families - and to feel at home where they are.

HB 2745, the Voter Access Act represents a key step forward in making the voting process accessible to all communities a government is supposed to represent.

I strongly urge the committee members to vote yes and pass the bill.

Sincerely,  
Brian Liu  
Forward Together Action  
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