



Contact: Rob Bovett  
Oregon Association of County Clerks  
1201 Court Street NE, Suite 300  
Salem, OR 97301  
rbovett@oregoncounties.org  
541-270-7414

April 5, 2021

## WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE BUDGET

Dear Chair Golden, Co-Chair Smith, Senators Anderson and Lieber,  
and Representatives Gomberg, Hayden, Hudson, and Wilde,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide some very brief comments on the Secretary of State (SOS) budget on behalf of the Oregon Association of County Clerks (OACC). OACC encourages your support of the SOS budget request for 2021-23. The SOS budget touches several important areas that are key to the successful administration of fair and accurate elections by Oregon's 36 county clerks and election administrators. Items of key importance include:

- **Staffing for Elections and Information Services Divisions:** Top notch technology and security are critical to Oregon's election process and voter confidence. Thus, the SOS Elections and Information Services Division must have adequate funding to recruit, train, and retain professional and highly qualified staff. These two Divisions are responsible for providing technical support and expertise on the programs needed to keep elections running smoothly across the state, including voter registration (OCVR), campaign finance (ORESTAR) and election night reporting, to name just a few. Especially as the SOS undertakes a major project to replace OCVR, skilled staff are required to ensure a smooth transition to replace this 15-year-old system that no longer meets the changing needs of modern elections.
- **Improving Voter Communications:** Law enforcement, intelligence agencies, and election officials all agree that the spread of voter misinformation and disinformation is one of the gravest threats to the functioning of our democratic system. With disinformation campaigns growing in scale and sophistication, the SOS plays a key role in providing accurate and trusted communication to voters. Improving staffing resources, including the addition of communications, outreach and engagement staff, will allow the SOS to build more effective and transparent communications to combat misinformation and disinformation.
- **Continuation of Oregon Motor Voter Payments to Counties:** When implemented in 2016, Oregon Motor Voter resulted in increased costs to counties due to the increased number of ballots that needed to be printed, mailed, and processed because of the increase in registered voters. There is a budget note in the 2013-2015 budget that indicates a commitment to fund the counties to compensate for these increased costs. Policy Option Package # 115 - \$878,425 (GF) - includes the legislature's final payment commitment to Oregon counties to implement automatic voter registration.