# Oregon Should Expand Automatic Voter Registration to Additional Agencies

## Background

In 2016, Oregon pioneered Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) at DMV offices, automatically forwarding eligible citizen information from the DMV to election officials for voter registration purposes and setting a new benchmark for the country. Oregonians demonstrated that our government could more effectively and efficiently serve their constituents, and maximize the registration of eligible voters while saving time and money.

## Why Expand?

**Eligible Oregon voters are being left out of New Motor Voter.** Roughly 10% of Oregonians lack a driver's license, and the rate of getting a driver's license is trending down nationally. This decline is particularly among young and low-income populations, while many seniors lose access to driver's licenses as their vision declines. Age and income should not disqualify an eligible voter from participating in elections. **Oregon should expand Automatic Voter Registration to agencies that these eligible voters interact with.**

Oregon currently has a backlog at DMV's due to the 2020 pandemic, which means that more voters than ever will have delays in updating their voter registration. Additionally, **over 500,000 eligible Oregonians are not yet registered to vote.** By taking action now, Oregon can continue to lead the nation in secure, up-to-date voter rolls, reduce the need for extraneous mailings prior to Election Day, and minimize last-minute data entry of costly paper registrations leading up to the next major election.

## HB 2499 - How Expansion Will Work

In order to create an efficient voter registration system that maintains the spirit of true automatic voter registration, agencies must be able to determine eligibility through presented documentation, capture accurate data to securely transfer voter registration information, and interact with eligible Oregonians who are not already interacting with the DMV. This bill identifies two agencies that have those capabilities:

- **Oregon Health Authority (Medicaid)** Medicaid reaches a large population, including low-income individuals less likely to interact with the DMV, and Medicaid applications verify all the information needed for voter registration, including citizenship status. Its yearly re-enrollment means that data will be more up-to-date than the DMV. Additionally, Medicaid offices are already required to offer opt-in voter registration under the National Voter Registration Act, so an AVR system can build on and streamline an existing voter registration system.

- **Oregon Department of Revenue** While tax filing does not require citizenship verification as a part of the process, millions of Oregonians file state income tax forms each year. This system will allow Oregonians who already are registered to vote and have demonstrated eligibility to easily have their address updated as a part of the filing process without requiring additional action. Because many filers still receive a check by mail, these addresses are highly likely to be accurate and up-to-date.

- **Improvements to OVR System** Currently, Oregonians who do not have a driver's license must register to vote with a paper form due to a lack of signature on file. This bill allows for registrants to upload an image of their signature and register with the last four digits of their social security number. It also permits the state to create an API that ensures that national registration tools like vote.gov integrate seamlessly with Oregon's existing OVR system.

As Oregon's economy and voter registration technology evolves, it may become clear that these agencies no longer reach every eligible Oregon voter. **This bill empowers the Governor to explore additional agencies for automatic voter registration and direct the Secretary of State to bring agencies online as needed.** This will allow the state the flexibility to continue to offer our state's eligible voters a secure, efficient and effective voter registration system that is virtually paper-free.

## Join these Organizations in Supporting HB 2499