



STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF HB 2745 & HB 3021

To: House Committee on Rules

From: United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555

April 12th, 2021

Dear Chair Smith Warner and members of the House Rules committee :

UFCW Local 555 strongly supports HB 2745, the Voter Access Act, and HB 3021, known as the VPS Language Access Bill.

UFCW Local 555 is over 25,000 workers strong in Oregon in Southwest Washington, and the largest private sector labor union in Oregon. Our members come from a number of industries, including grocery, retail, food processing, and healthcare. We are a diverse group of workers who take pride in acting as a strong collective voice for working people. The political process is often confusing for many of our members and if English is not your primary language at home, the election process can be an isolating experience. Without access to information about voting in their primary language, many are not sure their vote even matters. According to census data we have dozens of languages spoken throughout regions of the state, yet not enough resourcing is given to reach voters in the languages they understand in a meaningful way. Providing information about voting only in English disenfranchises thousands of Oregon voters.

The Voter Access Act, also known as HB 2745, ensures that voters can voluntarily provide their preferred language, in addition to race and ethnicity. We also see a great advantage to a companion concept in HB 3021, the VPS Language Access Bill, which would require the Secretary of State to create and make publicly available a list of five most common languages spoken and ensures state voters' pamphlet and county voters' pamphlet are translated into each of five identified languages and to make translated voters' pamphlets available on county website. These simple next steps will strengthen our democracy and expand voting access. Ensuring adequate access to language materials in the languages voters understand is a key element of a fair, effective, and responsive election system in Oregon.

HB 2745 and HB 3021 take a step in the right direction by harnessing the power of Oregon's motor voter law to collect data that will allow the Secretary of State and county elections offices across the state to better serve all Oregon voters.

We urge your YES vote on HB 2745 and HB 3021.

Fiona Yau-Luu,
Government and Community Affairs Coordinator,
UFCW Local 555