



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Chair Lieber, Vice Chair Knopp, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for hearing HB 3073 in the Senate Committee on Rules. This bill is one of those that we all hate is needed, but which recognizes the changing times and safety risks for those seeking to and serving in elected office is undeniable. The Legislature has acknowledged the growing contentiousness surrounding elections and public service and has taken steps to mitigate some of those concerns—most notably creating an avenue for election workers’ home addresses to be kept confidential, even from public records requests.

Elected officials and candidates, however, have been largely ignored from provisions to keep residential addresses from being readily accessible. At present, the only avenue available is by seeking a County Clerk’s authorization to exempt a residential address from public records requests using an SEL 550 form. This is a process most wouldn’t seek out until a threat has presented itself. HB 3073 aims to strike the balance between the need for public transparency and the safety for our elected officials from day one.

The current version of HB 3073 is the product of a work group convened by the Chair of the House Rules Committee, Representative Fahey, in order to work collaboratively with County Clerks, the Secretary of State’s office, and stakeholders to not only get the details of this policy into a workable form, but to understand the nuances of all the places residential addresses are recorded, which are publicly published, what avenues exist for removing this information, and how best to achieve a reasonable balance moving forward.

The resulting policy creates an “opt-in” process that will be clearly marked on candidate filings, offering a choice to candidates if they’d like this information removed from published records. If indicated, it would cause only the provided mailing address to be listed on things like candidate filings, lists of electors, and voter files. The residence address would still be subject to written public records requests, ensuring an avenue for accountability of eligibility is still available, but not leaving this information so easily available that people who may wish to do harm could “stumble” upon it readily.

With the feedback from County Clerks, it was decided to exempt elected Precinct Committee Persons (PCPs) from the residence address removal from voter files, and to clearly outline that this provision will only last as long as a candidate is running for an office—or for the duration of their time serving in that office.

While HB 3073 will not ensure the safety of anyone seeking to serve through elected office, it will hopefully help alleviate some of the reservation potential candidates have about stepping into this life of service. There has been significant conversation in the Legislature regarding how we can better make public service accessible to all Oregonians. Helping alleviate the safety concerns individuals have for themselves and their families is a great way to do just that.

I urge your support of HB 3073, and I thank you again for taking the time to hear this bill.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jami Cate". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jami Cate
State Representative
Oregon House District 11