

HB2585

I support this bill that will end **automatic** voter registration through Oregon Motor Voter. Many people who visit the DMV are not aware that they are automatically (or being forced) to register to vote, therefore, do not choose a party on the form, thus getting registered to vote automatically as unaffiliated.

As you can see by the numbers these two journalists show below in the articles they've written, there are more unaffiliated voters in this state than any one party. What we do not know, however, is if this is a choice by the voter or if this number is watered down with people who don't care to vote, did not choose a party at the DMV, have moved from the state, are deceased, etc.

On May 17, 2022 Tim Nesbitt of the Oregon Capital Chronicle wrote:

Unaffiliated registrants in Oregon recently surpassed registered Democrats by about 1,000 voters. Add to the mix those who are registered with Oregon's minor parties, and the two major parties don't look so major any more.

Oregon registered voters as of May 2022:

Democrats 34%

Republicans 25%

Unaffiliated/Other 41%

Similarly, in April 2022, Monthly Portland's Julia Silverman wrote:

"there are now 1,027,139 voters who are registered as non-affiliated with any party in Oregon, against 1,018,350 Democrats and 725,055 Republicans. (139,628 people are registered as members of the Independent Party of Oregon; several other smaller parties have a few thousand members apiece.)

The rise of the non-affiliated voter is traced directly to Oregon's much ballyhooed "motor voter" registration program, which kicked off in January of 2016. That law made voter registration automatic when obtaining or renewing a driver's license, meaning that hundreds of thousands of younger

voters, in particular, who might not have bothered to register before were suddenly added to the voter rolls.”

In my opinion, automatically registering a person to vote who does not or may not want or care to vote, disenfranchises all voters in this state. Unclaimed and unused ballots that float around to automatically registered voters who may not care to vote or no longer live at the addresses they are sent to are opportunities for bad actors to commit fraud. To protect the integrity of the electoral process, a person should never be “forced” or “automatically” registered to vote but given the opportunity if they choose to. A person who “chooses” to be part of this country’s electoral process is more likely to change their registration when they relocate, contrary to someone who may not desire to participate to begin with.

Voting in our elections should be a privilege and should never be disenfranchised by such a lax procedure. Nothing in Voter Registrations should be automatic, in my opinion. The voters in this state need assurances that accurate and current voter registration rolls are maintained and not polluted with thousands of unaffiliated voters who may not desire to vote, have moved, or are deceased.

This bill takes away the “automatic” or “forcing” to register to vote but “allows” a person to “choose” to register at that time if they want to. I support this bill and encourage all legislators to do the same. It is a step in the right direction of returning integrity to our vote. Oregonians of all political leanings deserve to know that our elections are carried out with the utmost integrity and our legislation is working in a positive way to make that happen.