



Isabela Villarreal

RE: Strongly Oppose Repealing Automatic Voter Registration, HB 2585

February 14th, 2023

Chair Fahey, Vice Chair Breese-Iverson, and members of the committee,

My name is Isabela Villarreal and I am the Policy and Communications Director at Next Up Action Fund. Our mission is to build political power with diverse young people to achieve a more just and equitable Oregon. As an organization that builds political power and strong, effective leadership opportunities for diverse young people, I am here to represent Next Up Action Fund in strongly opposing HB 2585, which would repeal Automatic Voter Registration.

We have a track record of dismantling structural barriers for more representative democracy and have driven advocacy efforts for election updates resulting in Oregon being one of the easiest states to vote in with over 93% of eligible voters registered. Notably, in 2015, after half a decade of advocacy, we helped pass the nation's first-ever Automatic Voter Registration law. Oregon's AVR system has been nothing less than a qualified success over the last seven years, registering more than half a million new registrants and updating registration records for another million.

Ultimately, HB 2585 goes against Oregon's values. Oregon has always been a leader of election modernization, security, and voter registration, and this bill does not align with that vision. AVR has closed registration gaps, improved the security and accuracy of the voter file, decreased workloads and lowered costs for agencies, and continued to protect non-citizens. Voters face less confusion and get an opportunity to opt out of the voter registration service. There is no reason to repeal this successful policy, one that has set a precedent for the entire nation in election modernization, and where many states have followed suit in implementing AVR after seeing its numerous benefits in Oregon.

Our democracy is strongest when every eligible voter has convenient and secure avenues to participation, and AVR offers just that. This bill will move our elections systems backwards and weaken the health of Oregon's democracy. Therefore, I urge the committee to take no action on HB 2585.

Thank you,

Isabela Villarreal, she/her
Policy and Communications Director