

Esteem Chair Fahey and Members of the Committee,

My name is Miriam G. Cummins and I am the Executive Director for Oregon Voice whose mission is to provide support to our community partners with civic engagement plans, tools, data, and coordination. We believe that we can achieve power through grassroots transformational organizing, data-informed strategic campaigns, accessible elections, in order to have a healthy and just democracy that works toward liberation.

We are here before you in opposition of HB 2585 that indicates to “End automatic voter registration through Oregon Motor Voter”. Before the Oregon Motor Voter Act, Oregonians needed to take a separate step to register to vote at the DMV after obtaining or renewing their driver license. This law makes voter registration automatic, which eliminates the need to fill out the voter registration card. By eliminating the barrier of an additional step to register to vote, it has increased the amount of non-affiliated voters that we have in Oregon. When it comes to democracy and exercising your right to vote, this is a remarkable resource to have. We want individuals to be informed so that they can make their own decisions when it comes to voting and exercising that right. As part of our democracy it is crucial that Oregonians are informed and have their right to vote easily accessible.

According to FairVote.org, the 4 reasons why Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) is a common sense policy is as follows:

- 1) Creates a diverse and more representative voting population - meaning that it strengthens democracy by expanding and broadening the electorate
- 2) Lowers cost for voter registration - by making it electronic, it has drastically reduced the costs of paper-based voter registration by not having to maintain antiquated systems
- 3) Eliminates human error - meaning that by implementing AVR there has been a decrease in human errors in voter registration - for instance the registrant's handwriting is illegible.
- 4) Decreases voter fraud - only eligible voters are registered to vote, information that is frequently updated in government databases.

What HB 2585 is proposing is to decrease the number of Oregonians that are eligible to vote. There have been arguments regarding Voting Security on who gets registered and if US citizens status is checked. When visiting the Oregon Secretary of State website under Oregon Motor Voter Act FAQ, it states “ The Elections Division will only send Oregon Motor Voter Cards to people who have provided documentation that they are US citizens. Oregon voters are also required to attest to their qualifications – including citizenship – at the time they submit their ballot.” The step to ensure that individuals are indeed eligible to vote is being implemented.

We want to emphasize the importance of having eligible Oregonians registered to vote. The Automatic Voter Registration through the DMV has opened the opportunity for those to vote that would have not otherwise done so. For these reasons, we are in opposition to HB 2585, as it will eliminate opportunity for individuals to vote and be heard.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Miriam G. Cummins
Executive Director
Oregon Voice