

SB 1577 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

Action Date: 02/15/24

Action: Do pass with amendments. Refer to Ways and Means by prior reference. (Printed A-Eng).

Vote: 3-2-0-0

Yeas: 3 - Gorsek, Manning Jr, Woods

Nays: 2 - Linthicum, Thatcher

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 2/13, 2/15

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure requires the Director of the Legislative Policy and Research Office to study the viability, benefits, and challenges of public institutions of higher education providing the Secretary of State with electronic records containing data from applicants seeking admission to the institutions for the purpose of aiding the Secretary in determining the applicants' eligibility as qualified electors, and in registering those applicants who are eligible as electors. The measure also requires the Director to study the viability, benefits, and challenges of the Department of Transportation providing missing registration information for these same applicants to assist the Secretary in determining their eligibility as qualified electors and in registering those who are eligible as electors. The measure requires that the Director must also study the Secretary's use of the information provided by the Department of Transportation and public institutions of higher education to facilitate greater voter registration and participation in elections in Oregon. It requires a report on the study and findings must be provided to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to rules by October 1, 2026. Finally, the measure takes effect on the 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Potential challenges with data sharing
- Validation of data as opposed to data sharing
- History of automatic voter registration
- Eligibility criteria to vote in Oregon
- Goals of conducting this study and role of the Legislative Policy and Research Office

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces the measure.

BACKGROUND:

In order to register to vote in Oregon, an individual must be a citizen of the United States, a resident of Oregon, and at least 16 years of age. If a person registers who is not yet age 18, they will not receive a ballot until an election occurs on or after their 18th birthday. Automatic voter registration (AVR) is a process where eligible voters are automatically registered to vote when they interact with certain government agencies, most commonly as an opt-out process following interactions with the state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) offices. In 2016, Oregon became the first state to automatically register eligible citizens who are not currently registered to vote when they apply for an original, renewal, or replacement driver license, permit, or identification card through the DMV. House Bill 2177 (2015) required the Oregon Department of Transportation to provide the Elections Division of the Secretary of State with the electronic records of each person who may be eligible to vote after certain interactions with the DMV. The law, known as "Oregon Motor Voter," was enacted by the Legislative Assembly to

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modernize the federal "Motor Voter Act" that required DMVs in most states to offer voter registration services, primarily by asking customers if they would like to register to vote.

Senate Bill 1577 A requires the Legislative Policy and Research Director to study the viability, benefits, and challenges of extending automatic voter registration to applicants of public institutions of higher education.