

February 12, 2024

Chair Lieber, Vice-Chair Knopp, and members of the Senate Committee on Rules:

I am Tamara Burkovskaia, Slavic/Eastern European community activist and Chair of the Translation Advisory Council to the Secretary of State.

I'm writing to express my strong support to SB 1533, which increases, from 5 to 10, the number of the most commonly spoken languages in each county, other than English, that the Secretary of State must include on a publicly available list and into which the secretary must translate voters' pamphlets. The bill also increases the estimated number of people in each county who speak each listed language from 100 to 300.

Oregon is home to an estimated 4.233 million residents. While the vast majority speak English, around 15.3 percent of persons above the age of 4, or about 648,741 Oregonians (the 2021 American Community Survey from the United States Census Bureau data), speak a language other than English at home. Considering the increasing diversity of the Oregon population, it is important to provide an easy access to election materials in different languages for limited English proficiency (LEP) voters. Since the list of top 10 languages will be established based on the best available data sources, this will ensure broader participation of eligible voters in the election and will send a clear signal to the communities that every vote does matter.

I am confident that SB 1533 will serve better engagement of all Oregonians, especially LEP voters, in the electoral process, and the Translation Advisory Council will continue to assist the Secretary of State with this very important task.

I urge you to support to this bill.

Respectfully,

*T. Burkovskaia*

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