

Dear Chair Bowman, Vice-Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Drazan and members of the committee,

We are writing on behalf of the Progressive Elections Coalition in strong support of HB 3493, which would prohibit landlords from banning political canvassing in manufactured home parks and marinas. This legislation is essential to upholding the constitutional rights of residents, protecting their ability to engage in political expression, and fostering a healthier, more democratic society.

The right to free speech and the right to engage in political activities are fundamental to our democracy. Political canvassing is an important form of expression through which citizens can engage with others, share information, and advocate for causes they believe in. Manufactured home park residents and marina tenants, like all Americans, deserve the ability to participate in these democratic processes without interference from landlords.

Manufactured home park residents and marina tenants often face unique challenges, including limited options for political participation. Many residents in these communities are older adults, working-class individuals, or people with limited access to transportation. It is important to recognize that banning political canvassing often disproportionately affects marginalized and low-income populations. Political canvassing allows them to learn about candidates, policies, and issues that directly affect their lives, particularly in areas where traditional outreach and engagement may be lacking.

When landlords prohibit political canvassing, they are removing the agency of the residents to choose to participate. There may be some residents who choose to not answer their door, or not engage, but there are others who would greatly benefit from the conversation and would welcome it.

One of the often-overlooked impacts of prohibiting political canvassing in manufactured home parks and marinas is the negative effect it can have on campaign workers and volunteers. Political campaigns rely on canvassing as one of the most effective ways to connect with voters, particularly in local elections where personal outreach is key to educating voters about particular issues or candidates.

HB 3493 is a necessary and positive step toward ensuring that all residents of Oregon, regardless of where they live, have the ability to exercise their First Amendment rights, engage in political discourse, and contribute to our democratic processes. This coalition urges the committee to pass HB 3493.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Iris Hodge, Director of Government Relations and Communications, OSEA  
Kevin Sullivan, Public Affairs Consultant, Oregon Education Association

Elsie Elling, Political & Policy Strategist, SEIU 503  
Miriam Cummins, Executive Director, Oregon State Voice  
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