

Submitter: Judith Ponder  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB210

My name is Judith Ponder, I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 210, which seeks to make in-person voting on Election Day the standard method for conducting elections in Oregon while limiting vote-by-mail options and imposing stringent identification requirements. I believe this bill undermines the accessibility and inclusivity that have been the hallmarks of Oregon's electoral system for decades.

I have lived in Oregon for nearly 25 yrs and have enjoyed the vote-by-mail system. I love that it allows me to take my time, review the issues and candidates, and fill out the voting form in the privacy of my own home. It allows me to ensure I am well informed on the issues and candidates. It also allows me to vote unlike other states I have lived in with in-person voting where I would have had to take time off work to vote. As a single mother of 3 children that was not feasible; putting food on the table and paying rent was the priority. I have lived in 5 states and Oregon is the only state where no matter what a person's financial situation, physical or mental problems are, and whether they work or not allows citizens to vote because vote-by-mail removes the impediment of taking time off work, finding transportation to a voting site, or having to put to put providing for a family ahead of voting rights because it can be done in the privacy of ones own home.

Oregon has been a pioneer in implementing a universal vote-by-mail system, which has significantly increased voter participation and streamlined the electoral process. This system allows voters to receive and return their ballots by mail, providing ample time to consider their choices and participate in elections without the constraints of a single Election Day. The success of this approach has positioned Oregon as a national leader in promoting accessible and secure voting practices.?

Below are my main concerns regarding Senate Bill 210:

1. **Reduced Accessibility:** Mandating in-person voting as the default method disproportionately affects individuals with disabilities, elderly voters, those with demanding work schedules, and residents in rural areas who may face challenges reaching polling stations. The current vote-by-mail system accommodates these voters effectively, ensuring that all Oregonians have an equal opportunity to participate in the democratic process.?

2. **Voter Identification Requirements:** The bill's requirement for voters to present valid government-issued identification when voting in person or requesting a mail-in ballot introduces unnecessary barriers. Studies have shown that such requirements can

disenfranchise eligible voters, particularly among marginalized communities who may lack the specified forms of ID.? One already has to provide identification to be registered to vote since Oregon has a Motor-Voter Law.

3. Elimination of State-Paid Postage: Removing the provision for state-paid postage on mail-in ballots places an additional burden on voters that could deter participation, especially among low-income individuals.?

All of these things will disenfranchise voters and decrease voter turnout while not reducing any basically non-existent voter fraud. I feel this is a step backwards in society. People who work demanding jobs or those who are disabled should still be able to vote, By putting these roadblocks to vote creates an unfair system. All Oregonians deserve their right to vote. I know several people who have physical disabilities and they would also have a problem being able to vote on matters that pertain to their services and needs. This Bill represents a significant step backward for voting accessibility in Oregon. By dismantling the proven vote-by-mail system and imposing restrictive measures, this legislation threatens to disenfranchise countless voters and erode the inclusive democracy that Oregonians have long enjoyed. I urge you to oppose SB 210 and to continue supporting policies that make voting accessible.