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On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB210

Oregon's SB 210, which proposes making in-person voting on Election Day the standard method for conducting elections, threatens to dismantle one of the most secure, accessible, and effective voting systems in the nation. Oregon's vote-by-mail system has been a model of success for over two decades, increasing voter participation while maintaining election security and integrity. This bill is a regressive step that would not only create unnecessary barriers to voting but also introduce logistical and financial challenges that Oregon does not need.

Oregon was the first state in the U.S. to conduct all elections by mail after voters overwhelmingly approved it in 1998. Since its implementation:

Voter turnout has consistently been among the highest in the nation, often exceeding the national average.

Election security measures, including signature verification, have been proven effective in preventing fraud.

Voter convenience has increased, particularly for seniors, rural residents, and individuals with disabilities.

Costs have been reduced, as vote-by-mail eliminates the need for extensive polling place infrastructure.

A. Disenfranchisement of Voters

Moving to in-person voting would create significant barriers for many groups, including:

Rural voters, who may live far from polling locations.

People with disabilities, who benefit from the convenience of voting at home.

Working-class voters, who may struggle to take time off on Election Day.

Caregivers and parents, who may find it difficult to stand in long lines with children.

B. Logistical Challenges and Costs

A switch to in-person-only voting would dramatically increase election costs by requiring:

More polling places, with staff, security, and infrastructure.

New voting machines and ballot printing, a major financial burden for the state.

Training and staffing for thousands of poll workers, which can be difficult, especially in rural areas.

Oregon has already streamlined its system to reduce costs and maximize efficiency. SB 210 would undo decades of smart policy.

C. Increased Risk of Voter Suppression

Long lines, reduced polling locations, and restrictive voting hours can discourage people from voting, leading to lower turnout. Many states that rely on in-person voting experience:

Hours-long wait times, particularly in urban areas.

Polling place closures, which disproportionately impact marginalized communities.

Confusion and administrative errors, such as polling places running out of ballots.

Vote-by-mail eliminates these risks, ensuring that every registered voter has an equal opportunity to participate in democracy.

Oregon's vote-by-mail system is secure, cost-effective, and highly accessible. SB 210 would create unnecessary barriers, suppress voter participation, and increase election costs without justification. The best way to conduct elections is the system that ensures the most people can vote easily and securely—and Oregon's vote-by-mail method achieves exactly that.