

Submitter: Ash Rhovan

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB210

The proposed bill is a direct attack on our democracy, the foundation of our country. The ability to mail in votes has made it possible for those with jobs to be able to engage in our democratic process--especially those in law enforcement and healthcare, where by necessity someone must be working at all times, thereby denying those actively serving the public the ability to cast their vote. Voting lines will become so long that it will be impossible to simply drop by a voting site during a break or lunch hour, so even if those people could theoretically get coverage so they'd have the ability to leave and vote, they wouldn't have the time to be able to do so. Additionally, our elderly, who often cannot drive themselves, a population which is increasing rapidly, will be excluded from being able to participate in yet another facet of our society that is integral to protecting and promoting their own rights. And finally, those with disabilities, whether they're on disability or not, would suffer. Veterans with disabilities from their service, those receiving cancer treatments who are unable to tolerate long periods out of the house or miss treatments, those who are unable to drive for various reasons--all of them would have their right to vote torn from them.

As an oncology nurse, I of course work with other healthcare workers. I also care for the elderly and those on disability for their cancer treatments on a daily basis. It is a struggle for many of our patients to find rides to their treatment, a literal necessity for their life. In order for them to vote in person, not only would my patients have to find time for both them and a caregiver to go to a voting site, but they'd potentially have to then miss a life-saving treatment to do so. They also may be unable to tolerate standing in long lines or being out of the house for such an extended period of time, either due to side effects from chemotherapy, or due to disease process. I see every group I mentioned above and their struggles every single day. I watch as they are doing their best just to survive, and this bill aims to deprive them of their right to vote and punishes our most vulnerable for circumstances beyond their control.

Portland was a trend-setter when it came to mail-in voting. As an OPB article written in January of 2023 noted, Oregon had the highest voter turnout in the entire country. Think about that. Think about how effective the ability to mail in ballots has been in allowing Oregon voters from all over the state to express their opinions and participate in a cornerstone of our democracy. Every citizen has both the right and the obligation to engage in this process, and our government should be making that easier for it's citizens, not actively hindering it.

Only people who want to undermine and devalue democracy itself would support a bill that would essentially deny millions, from all over the political spectrum, the ability

to vote. All Oregonians deserve a voice, whether conservative, center, or liberal. Taking the voice away from your citizens would speak volumes to how little their voice really means to you. And I hope that there never comes a day when it is you who is silenced because of a bill like this.