

Submitter: Stephen Higginbotham

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB210

I am writing today to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 210, which seeks to take away Oregon's proven, accessible, and secure vote by mail system. As an engaged Oregonian, I firmly believe that vote by mail is fundamental to ensuring that all eligible voters, regardless of their circumstances, have the opportunity to participate in our democracy.

Oregon has been a leader in vote by mail for over two decades, demonstrating time and again that it is safe, secure, and effective. This system allows all Oregonians, especially those with disabilities, seniors, working families, and those in rural communities, to exercise their right to vote without unnecessary barriers. Taking away vote-by-mail would disproportionately harm those who cannot easily access in-person polling places due to work obligations, mobility issues, or other constraints.

For many Oregonians, the ability to vote from home provides not only convenience but also the ability to make informed decisions. Voters can take the time to research candidates and ballot measures with their materials spread around them and a warm cup of coffee, ensuring they are making educated choices rather than being rushed in a polling place. Additionally, those who work long hours in the medical field or who have unpredictable schedules in the retail/service industry cannot always take time off to stand in line to vote. The vote-by-mail system ensures that they are not forced to choose between their job and their constitutional right to vote.

Equally important, eliminating vote by mail would place a severe burden on the elderly and people with disabilities. Many Oregonians face mobility challenges or health concerns that make standing in long lines at polling places unrealistic or even impossible. Vote by mail ensures that these individuals can fully participate in elections without undue hardship.

Furthermore, vote by mail is a secure process. Oregon's system includes multiple safeguards, such as signature verification, ballot tracking, and strict chain of custody procedures, which protect against fraud and ensure the integrity of our elections. Removing this system in favor of in-person-only voting would not enhance election security but instead disenfranchise thousands of voters.

Oregonians have consistently supported vote-by-mail, and it has been instrumental in maintaining high voter turnout and public confidence in our elections. This bill is not about improving our electoral process, it is about creating unnecessary barriers to voting. I urge you to reject Senate Bill Number 210 and protect the rights of all Oregonians to vote conveniently, securely, and fairly.

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Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully ask that you stand with the people of Oregon and oppose this bill.