

To the Honorable Senate Committee re: SB-210

Many years ago, while living in a smaller town in Oregon, I stood in line waiting for my turn to enter the voting area to cast my vote for President, members of Congress, and local officials. The line was long, filled with working men and women, who after arranging for their kids care, had come to vote. This was LONG before our current computer in our pocket days and also before Oregon initiated vote by mail. It was about 30 minutes before the poll would be closed. As we stood there, someone arrived to say that the polls had closed in the East Coast. They were calling the election. Before we all had even voted, we knew who had won.

The line began to thin, people walked out of line mumbling about what did it matter anyway. The election was over. This meant they didn't vote for Senators, Representatives or any of the initiatives or local bond issues, on the ballot because their vote didn't matter. The poll workers tried to announce that, but people kept on walking.

Vote by mail has increased voting because it has been easier for people to submit their vote. To date fraud has not been an issue. But if some think talking about it enough will make it so, they are wrong. Returning to in-person voting will decrease the number of votes submitted. That may very well be the intent. It speaks volumes that some want to make it MORE difficult for Oregonians to vote. We are fortunate that voters all receive the State printed Voter's Pamphlet. Vote by mail gives every Oregonian time to actually READ about each candidate, in the Candidates own entry they approved and submitted. The same is true for each ballot initiative. By the time voters submit their ballot, they have made their mind up, they have had the opportunity to talk among their friends, or keep their own counsel. Ballot issues are often misrepresented in ads, or subject to out of state influences, which do not reflect the best interests of voters. Discussing it, reading about it, deliberating about it is the job of voters. Vote by mail provides the time to make informed decisions.

In this new era for muck-raking, Oregon voters deserve and have come to expect they will have the time they need to wade through all the misinformation, and be informed to make the vote that represents their opinion. Vote by mail is a form of respect for voters. It says, we respect you, we want you to take the time you need to decide. And not while waiting in line to vote, only to learn an election has already been called. Vote by mail means your vote for Oregon's Congressional Representatives and Senators will be decided by the majority of Oregonians, not just those who stayed in line. I don't know anyone who wants to go backwards instead of keeping our mail in voting system that WORKS FOR Oregonians.

One last point: for some years my husband and I worked overseas. We kept our home in Oregon, we made sure our voter registration was current, and we voted thanks to the great staff of our local elections clerk. Without them we would not have been able to vote for our future

when we returned to Oregon to live full time as we now do. Service members stationed overseas are given the means to vote. Missionaries, medical volunteers, US businesses represented by Oregonians living in foreign countries deserve to be able to vote. Vote by mail makes that possible.

There is only one alternative that could replace Vote by Mail: a NATIONAL VOTING HOLIDAY every 2 years. Meanwhile Oregon's vote by mail system is safe, secure and more importantly increases the likelihood of Oregonians casting their informed votes. Who DOESN'T want that? And what exactly are the motives of those who want to do away with Oregon's Vote by Mail?

KEEP AND PROTECT OREGON'S VOTE BY MAIL