

Submitter:

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On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB210

Chair Jama and other members of the Senate Committee on Rules:

Voting by mail works, and Oregon was the first state in the country to show just how smoothly it works. The supporters of this bill (and others like it across the country) seem to aim to disenfranchise parts of the state's population. Perhaps they don't see how voting by mail is so universally beneficial that their own constituents and supporters would also suffer if SB210 is passed. Following are a couple of examples.

Voting by mail works for older populations, who frequently have mobility challenges that make voting by mail more accessible and comfortable. People like my father who are physically taxed by walking more than a few feet or standing upright for any length of time, the result from decades of physical wear from being an auto mechanic. Sure, he can request a mail-in ballot under the proposed bill, but who decides whether he is considered "worthy" of this alternative under the proposed change? These concerns are particularly acute now, as so many baby boomers like my father are approaching or in their senior years.

Voting by mail works for rural citizens, who often need to overcome great distances to access basic services. Ranchers living east of the Cascades may need to travel hours round-trip for a simple medical appointment—why would our elected officials be trying to make it harder for them to participate in the decisions that impact their land and livelihood? The US Postal Service keeps rural residents connected across long distances with efficiency while maintaining citizen privacy—allowing individuals more freedom to handle other business within the same time. Requiring in-person voting again would take people away from their businesses, homes, and families needlessly, with our state and national economies suffering because of it.

Furthermore, voting by mail works for elections offices and the hardworking public servants who run them. When ballots are collected over a number of weeks, county elections staff can spread out their mountainous workload across days instead of hours, relieving some of the immense time pressure involved on election night. Time pressure and long hours can create the perfect condition for errors, and I think we can all agree that we don't want to be introducing error into our elections process!

These are just a few of the many ways voting for mail benefits Oregon and Oregonians—I'm sure you'll hear about so many more in the public comment process for SB210. Voting by mail has worked for Oregon for 30 years—let's not return to an outdated, inefficient mode that offers no real benefits to the people of Oregon.

Heather Andrews

Lifelong resident of Clackamas County