

Submitter:

Barbara Anderson

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB210

I oppose this bill. Senate Bill 210 (SB210), which aims to establish in-person voting as the standard method of voting, sets the date for its implementation in 2028 and proposes a referendum for public approval, could raise various concerns for many.

#### 1. Accessibility Concerns

- **Impact on Vulnerable Populations:** Many individuals face barriers to in-person voting, including people with disabilities, the elderly, rural residents, and those with limited access to transportation. Requiring in-person voting as the standard method could disenfranchise these groups.
- **Health and Safety:** Given the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, many have come to rely on absentee or mail-in voting as a safer and more accessible option. In-person voting could expose individuals to health risks, especially in the case of future public health crises.

#### 2. Increased Costs and Resources

- **Financial Burden on Local Governments:** Implementing in-person voting as the standard method could place significant strain on local election infrastructure. This includes the costs of staffing polling stations, providing transportation for underserved areas, and ensuring accessibility.
- **Longer Lines and Wait Times:** With more people voting in person, we could see longer lines and wait times at polling places. This may discourage some voters from participating, especially those with time constraints or work obligations.

#### 3. Potential for Voter Suppression

- **Unintended Disenfranchisement:** Some people may not have the time or resources to vote in person, especially those with jobs, caregiving responsibilities, or other obligations. This bill could disproportionately affect low-income communities, students, and people who work multiple jobs.
- **Burden of Travel:** Voters in rural or remote areas, where polling stations may be fewer and further between, could be at a disadvantage when trying to vote in person.

#### 4. Proven Success of Mail-in Voting

- **Convenience and Security:** Mail-in voting has been shown to increase voter participation and make the voting process more accessible. Many states already have reliable systems in place for absentee voting, which have been used successfully for years.
- **Increased Voter Turnout:** With the option of voting by mail, many voters who otherwise would not have cast a ballot due to time constraints or mobility issues are able to participate, contributing to a more representative democracy.

#### 5. Potential for Increased Partisan Division

- **Polarizing Impact:** Making in-person voting the standard could inadvertently

create a partisan divide, especially if certain groups are disproportionately affected by long wait times or other barriers that in-person voting might present.

#### 6. Technology and Innovation

- Embracing Digital Voting: As technology advances, digital voting systems could be a safer, more efficient alternative to in-person voting. Instead of rolling back options for voter access, legislators should be looking toward future technologies that can increase security while offering more flexibility in how people vote.

In conclusion, while ensuring secure and fair elections is crucial, SB210's emphasis on in-person voting as the standard method could limit access, create unnecessary barriers, and increase the cost of elections. It's vital to maintain a system that accommodates a variety of voting methods to ensure all eligible voters can participate.

At the very least before moving forward with such a measure, a more thorough examination of its potential impact on voter participation and the resources available should be considered.