

Submitter: Esther Baas

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB210

Mail-in ballots have been an equalizer for Oregon voters since 1998, and have allowed Oregon to consistently have some of the highest voter turnouts in presidential and midterm elections throughout the country. Research conducted by political scientists at Brigham Young University and the University of Virginia found that mail-in ballot voting between 1996 and 2018 expanded voter turnout by about 1.5x (from 1.8% to 2.9% of the population) for both presidential and midterm elections. This is not surprising, as many Oregonians and Americans do not have the luxury of getting off work to stand in line to vote, or have other life-related concerns that do not permit them to vote on election day (e.g. health concerns, disabilities). Moreover, this is not a partisan issue. The researchers found that the voter increase was only slightly skewed for Democratic voters, with a difference of only 0.7% as compared to Republican votes. Higher voter turnout should always be the goal in a democracy, and mail-in voting has proven to be a vehicle to do just that. I ask the Senate Committee on Rules to please vote no on Senate Bill 210 to protect voter rights in Oregon.