

Submitter:

Wyatt Davis-Hinze

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB210

Dear Members of the Senate Committee On Rules,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 210, which seeks to make in-person voting on Election Day the standard method for conducting elections in Oregon. This bill proposes significant changes to our current voting system, including the elimination of universal vote-by-mail, the introduction of strict voter identification requirements, and the cessation of state-funded return postage for ballots.

Oregon has long been a pioneer in vote-by-mail, a system that has demonstrably increased voter participation and ensured secure, accessible elections for all residents. Transitioning to an in-person voting model would not only disenfranchise many voters but also undermine the democratic principles our state holds dear.

Concerns regarding SB 210 include:

Voter Accessibility: Mandating in-person voting poses significant challenges for individuals with disabilities, the elderly, those with demanding work schedules, and residents in rural areas who may have limited access to polling stations. The current vote-by-mail system accommodates these voters, ensuring that all Oregonians have an equal opportunity to participate in the electoral process.

Voter Turnout: Oregon consistently boasts one of the highest voter turnout rates in the nation, a success largely attributed to our vote-by-mail system. Implementing in-person voting could deter participation, leading to decreased civic engagement and a less representative democracy.

Financial Implications: Establishing and maintaining in-person polling locations statewide would incur substantial costs, including expenses related to staffing, equipment, and security. These financial burdens could strain state and local budgets, diverting resources from other critical public services. ?

Voter Identification Requirements: The proposed requirement for government-issued photo identification may disproportionately affect marginalized communities, including low-income individuals and people of color, who are less likely to possess such identification. This could lead to the disenfranchisement of eligible voters and exacerbate existing inequalities in our electoral system.

Ballot Return Deadline and Postage: Requiring all ballots to be returned by Election Day and removing state-funded return postage may create additional barriers for voters, particularly those who rely on mail-in voting due to health concerns or other personal circumstances.

In conclusion, SB 210 threatens to reverse the progress Oregon has made in

creating an inclusive, accessible, and efficient voting system. I urge you to consider the detrimental impact this bill would have on voter participation and equity in our state. Please vote against SB 210 to preserve the integrity and accessibility of Oregon's elections.

Thank you for your time and consideration.