

Submitter:

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On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB210

Oregon has been a leader in the vote-by-mail system in the United States. The process began in 1981 when the state legislature authorized a test of vote-by-mail for local elections. By 1987, it became a permanent option for local and special elections across most counties. In 1993, Oregon conducted its first statewide special election entirely by mail. The program gained further traction in 1995 and 1996 with successful mail-only federal primary and general elections. In 1998, Oregon voters overwhelmingly approved a ballot measure to adopt vote-by-mail for all elections, making it the first state in the country to do so. The 2000 presidential election marked the first time Oregon conducted a national election entirely by mail, with a remarkable 79% voter turnout.

The benefits of Oregon's vote-by-mail system are widely recognized. It makes voting more accessible, especially for individuals who may face barriers getting to polling places—such as those with disabilities, elderly voters, or people with irregular work schedules. It gives voters more time to research candidates and ballot measures from the comfort of their homes, which can lead to more informed choices. Vote-by-mail also reduces election day congestion and can be more cost-effective to administer. Additionally, Oregon has implemented security measures like signature verification and ballot tracking to maintain integrity and voter confidence. The result is a system that consistently delivers high turnout, convenience, and trust in the democratic process.

Stepping away from this very successful, popular program due to fear-mongering about security and dog whistles over the the cost of postage makes no sense. I urge our elected leaders to focus on the true issues affecting our state instead of wasting time and resources to redesign our time-tested vote-by-mail system.