

Submitter: Sam Workman
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB210

Statement to the Oregon Legislature in Support of SB 210

Chairperson and Members of the Legislature,

I respectfully submit this statement in strong support of Senate Bill 210, which calls for the repeal of Oregon's vote-by-mail system and the transition to in-person voting.

Oregon was a pioneer in adopting vote-by-mail statewide. However, it is time to re-evaluate whether this method continues to best serve democratic integrity, voter engagement, and public trust. Voting is the cornerstone of our republic, and the method by which we cast our ballots should reflect not only accessibility, but also transparency, security, and civic responsibility. In-person voting provides a more secure and verifiable process. It minimizes the risk of ballot harvesting, mail delays, lost ballots, or questions about chain-of-custody, and it allows for real-time identification verification.

Beyond security, in-person voting promotes civic engagement and a shared democratic experience. Just as we gather in person for other foundational civic duties—jury service, public hearings, and naturalization ceremonies—casting our ballots in a polling place reaffirms the seriousness of the act. It becomes a public ritual that reinforces community responsibility.

To ensure that every eligible voter can fully participate, I also advocate that Election Day be declared a state or federal holiday. Voting should not compete with work schedules, childcare obligations, or other responsibilities. By giving everyone the day off, we reinforce the importance of the vote and empower citizens to engage without barriers or excuses. Civic duty deserves civic time.

Furthermore, we should consider measures that emphasize voting as a responsibility—not just a right. For example, Australia mandates compulsory voting with a modest \$20 fine for failure to participate. As a result, their voter turnout consistently exceeds 90%. This approach is not punitive but symbolic—it reminds citizens that democracy only works when everyone contributes. Oregon should lead again by encouraging full participation, whether through robust civic education or incentives to vote.

In summary, SB 210 is a necessary step to restoring trust in our electoral process, encouraging civic engagement, and elevating the act of voting to its rightful place as

both a privilege and a duty. Let us modernize our approach to reflect both integrity and commitment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,