

Submitter:

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On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB210

I oppose SB 210 for many reasons, but chief among them is that Oregon has a long track record of safe and secure elections using mail-in ballots. Oregon currently requires every ballot signature be verified prior to it being counted which is a reasonable way to ensure that a ballot is cast by the appropriate party. To require a change to in-person voting indicates not a concern about election integrity, but rather indicates a desire to suppress voter turnout.

Implementing in-person voting puts additional burden on counties to find polling places that are accessible to those with disabilities and to install voting booths for election day with at least one of those booths at each polling location being accessible to those with disabilities.

For those for whom disability makes appearing in person at a polling location either impossible or difficult, a requirement that they request a ballot 21 days prior to an election in person or online is onerous. If it is difficult or impossible to appear in person at a polling place, then it would be as challenging to appear in person to request a ballot. This leaves requesting a ballot online which can also be difficult or impossible. If this person lives in an area without internet service, cannot afford internet service or has any number of disabilities that makes online access difficult, they would be precluded from voting.

People who live in rural areas and/or in economically disadvantaged areas are often without transportation to reach polling places and would often face the same hurdles in accessing a ballot as those who live with disabilities because internet coverage is neither uniform nor free. Perhaps the state of Oregon will offer free high-speed internet service to all to help ease some of this burden? Perhaps the state of Oregon will provide free state-issued identification for all of voting age? Perhaps the state of Oregon will offer free transportation to polling places?

Having polling places be open for a minimum of 8 hours and to be open until 8 p.m. means that a polling place meeting the minimum requirement could only be open from noon until 8 p.m. Any person working during those hours would be precluded from voting. One might say that they could just get a mail-in ballot but that is not always possible for the reasons due to transportation or internet access issues. It is also not hard to imagine circumstances under which a person might have a last-minute shift change in their job and suddenly be precluded from voting due to work and not have had a chance to request a ballot. Any person who became ill or injured within the 21-day window prior to election would also be precluded from voting as they would not have the ability to request and return a ballot.

Please do not support this bill which would further suppress voting in vulnerable populations.

