

Mail-in voting keeps the right to vote both accessible and safe. Election Day is not a mandatory day off and many are not able to skip a day of work- either due to financial necessity or lack of support from their employer. Having the ability to vote by mail also supports citizens who live with disabilities, of those who are single guardians/caretakers of those with disabilities, as well as parents of young children who cannot afford the cost of childcare. The public, state, and federal protection/support is simply not currently in place for all voters.

In addition, we have seen what in-person voting on Election Day can, and often does, look like. Lines of people waiting for several hours, under resourced supports (providing things like bottled water for those waiting), acts of intimidation or violence by voters of opposing beliefs, etc. It is within the realm of reasonable possibility to say that all of these things will very likely discourage citizens from exercising their right to vote at all.

If Oregon is concerned about protecting the security of voting and decides the best way to handle that is by requiring in-person voting on Election Day, we must first turn our attention to how these concerns will be handled and how we will truly support equal rights, opportunity and security for all citizens beforehand. Because there is enough confidence in this change to officially propose its implementation, I trust that you, as advocates and representatives of the public, have put some thought towards these matters. With that said, I would like to ask a few questions you have surely thoughtfully considered and adequately planned for.

- How do you plan to support low income voters who can't miss work or afford childcare?
- Can we ensure all employers will respect and honor their employees' right to vote? Is there a plan to enforce this? How will you prevent/monitor/react to acts of retaliation from the employer?
- Will everyone be protected and guaranteed to receive their daily wages if/when they take the day off? If so, where will this money come from? If not, I circle back to my question about what the plan would be for those who cannot afford to skip a day of work.
- Will small businesses, entrepreneurs and freelancers receive state support to account for any impact on their business revenue?
- Would childcare be provided? Would special care be provided for children with disabilities, higher needs, or those who are medically complex?
- What is the plan to support breastfeeding parents and/or freshly postpartum families, and their infants who rely on them?
- What is the plan to support those who work on-call, such as midwives, doctors, etc?
- How do you plan to support voters with mobility issues, disabilities, other impairments, or are medically fragile and can't easily or safely drive or travel?

- What will happen with voters who are hospitalized or in any sort of rehab facility? Or those who will need a medical treatment, such as dialysis or chemotherapy, at the time of voting?
- How do you plan to support voters who are veterans or trauma survivors and struggle with large crowds, noise, PTSD, etc?
- Is there a plan for those who live with a compromised immune system?
- How will we ensure the elderly, specifically those in retirement homes and hospice, are able to safely travel to the polls with necessary support?
- How do you plan to keep voters waiting in line safe while outside in the weather for multiple hours? Will there be ample access to water, food, shade, protection from rain, heat, restrooms, etc? Is there a plan if wildfires or other elements are severely impacting air quality?
- Will public transit, state provided shuttles, childcare, medical support, etc, be free for all citizens for the day?
- What systems will you have in place to effectively protect voters from the very active and real risk of violence, harassment, intimidation, etc?
- Will there be EMT, Fire and Police presence?
- Will there be metal detectors, bag checks and trained dogs to check for weapons?
- Would the national guard be present to provide aid and act in the event of civil unrest or election violence?
- How will those who provide the supports (transportation, childcare, medical providers, security, volunteers, etc), and other public servants, be able to vote if they're dealing with all of this?
- With the recently alarming, unprecedented attack on human rights by ICE, who have targeted people of color, including American Citizens due to the lack of due process before abduction, how can you assure legal citizens that they will be safe from federal agents wrongfully detaining them, holding them in inhumane conditions for an undetermined period of time while refusing/ignoring requests for legal representation? Election Day would be an excellent opportunity for ICE agents to treat crowded polls as open season, so to speak.
- What will the protocol be for voters who show up to cast their vote, wait for multiple hours, but need to leave before being able to do so? IE, family emergency, trouble with childcare, employer only provided a small window to vote and come back in to resume work duties, medical emergency, act of violence occurring, etc?

- Is the infrastructure of our government, state and federal, able to realistically provide the number of supports and services required to ensure all of this?

This is merely a toe dipped in the pool of considerations and scenarios that should be carefully examined before even entertaining the thought of putting this proposed action into motion. All of the citizens that fall into the categories above vastly outnumber the amount of fraud votes by mail. Due to a small number of people who violate voting laws, countless legal voters with the right to participate will be stripped of their ability to do so.

Give the key to a heavy, rusted door to an elderly veteran with stage 5 Parkinson's and tell him it's his right as an American to open that door. Then turn around, walk away, and leave him alone in the room to bask in the glory of having the right to do something he very likely can't do without support. A key means nothing if the holder doesn't have the means to use it. That is the reality of what we are facing when discussing rights without considering accessibility.

Though I greatly appreciate the concern and the importance of secure elections, I implore each member involved in this matter to take a moment and think not of the few this will prevent from illegally voting, but rather the magnitude of impact this will have on the legal voters who deeply desire to exercise their right to vote while trying to survive, stay afloat, provide for their families, and stay safe while doing so. How many key-holding citizens are you willing to abandon by allowing this to move forward, knowing the support isn't there? How many deprived legal votes is an acceptable exchange for one less fraudulent?

Thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts on this matter. May you be well and continue to amplify the voices, all voices, of our beautiful Oregon.

Signed in earnest,  
A key-holding mother of a disabled child