

Submitter:

Jacob Vela

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB210

Mail in voting is great. It gives more people the opportunity to vote that otherwise would have difficulty doing so, and makes it more convenient for all people. We're already told that our votes don't matter, and certain elected officials are making great efforts to ensure that people feel that way, so why would we want to put more barriers in front of it? The point of elections is to hear the will of the people, let's make as few barriers to people's vote as possible. If you're truly the best choice for the people, then more people voting should be good for you. Making it harder for people to vote doesn't make me believe that you truly think you can win elections.

This bill would also disproportionately affect people whose jobs or other living situations make it difficult for them to take hours out of their day to stand in line to vote. Yes, most employers are - on paper - required to allow their employees time to go vote, but that's not always practical in the real world. You're asking employees to make the effort and take a stand against employers that would not allow their employees to do so for various reasons. Even in situations where employees can, hourly employees very often need all the hours that they can get to make ends meet. Even for those whose jobs and lives allow it, why would you want to intentionally make it more difficult for them.

This is in an effort to combat "fraud"? No, I am confident it's being proposed for other motives.

This bill would enable efforts already being undertaken to reduce voter turnout. In the last major election, we already saw voting locations being removed or moved in an attempt to make voting more difficult for some populations through longer travel distances and longer wait times caused by fewer polling locations. These were not uniformly done, but were very targeted efforts at specific communities. Mail in voting removes these underhanded tricks from the election game, and ensures that the voice of all people is more adequately represented. It reduces the ability to suppress voter turnout.

Finally, I'd like to tell you about how my wife and I vote. We take our ballots that we get in the mail and we research and discuss each candidate from home. We end up voting in a more informed way because we are able to vote by mail. Occasionally, we will find someone or some measure that has some dealbreaker that causes us not to vote for them. We finish the process feeling more informed and involved, and that our votes went to people that we actually can support. We could not do this if we had to go in person, stand in line for hours, and then make decisions in a voting booth with

more limited access to information. An informed electorate is essential for a functioning democracy, and mail-in voting facilitates this for those that want to put the effort forward in a way that required in-person voting cannot.

I strongly oppose SB210. There is no good intention behind it. The claims of voter fraud are unfounded and unsubstantiated.

Much like accessible design in public spaces, when we facilitate voting for the few who truly depend on mail-in voting, we help everyone access democracy. Oregon has had a very high voter turnout. I'm proud of that. Let's keep it that way.