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

Senate Bill 210, which seeks to dismantle Oregon's long-standing vote-by-mail system in favor of mandatory in-person voting on Election Day, is a misguided and regressive proposal that undermines the very principles of accessibility and inclusivity that have defined our state's electoral process for decades. The notion of reverting to an exclusively in-person voting system is not only perplexing but also alarming, given the proven success and security of our current vote-by-mail system.

Oregon has been a pioneer in implementing vote-by-mail, becoming the first state to conduct all elections by mail following the passage of Ballot Measure 60 in 1998. This system has consistently resulted in high voter participation rates, with the 2000 presidential general election seeing a remarkable 79% turnout. The convenience and accessibility of vote-by-mail have empowered Oregonians from all walks of life to engage in the democratic process without unnecessary barriers.

The proposed shift to in-person voting, coupled with stringent identification requirements, threatens to disenfranchise countless voters, particularly those in rural communities, individuals with disabilities, and working citizens who may find it challenging to reach polling stations on a single designated day. Moreover, this move appears to align with broader national efforts aimed at restricting voting access under the guise of unfounded claims about election security.

It's disheartening to witness attempts to appease political agendas that seek to erode the democratic rights of Americans. Our vote-by-mail system has been a model of efficiency and integrity, free from the issues that some claim necessitate such drastic changes. Implementing SB 210 would not only be a step backward for Oregon but also set a dangerous precedent that could ripple across the nation.

SB 210 is an unnecessary and harmful proposal that threatens to undo the progress Oregon has made in making voting accessible and secure for all its residents. We must stand firm against this bill and any similar efforts that seek to undermine our democratic institutions. The right to vote is fundamental, and any attempt to restrict it should be met with unwavering opposition.