

Submitter:

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On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB210

Hello,

It is with fervence that I write to express strong opposition to making voting in person the standard method for voting in Oregon. Mail in voting has benefited myself personally and data clearly demonstrates that vote-by-mail is a safe, secure, and highly accessible method of casting ballots, making it superior to in person voting.

I grew up in another state and have personally experienced difficulties getting to the ballot box when in person voting was mandatory. Sometimes, you couldn't get away from work without repercussions (whether legal or not), sometimes the lines were too long, and sometimes when you moved, your name was tied to a different county and didn't show up when you did go to vote. Not only are these inconveniences, and arguably against our voting rights, but I missed out on voting once because of things like this. Not only that, but we did not receive local election ballots or reminders, making it so a vast majority of the citizens did not vote in their local elections. People in elected offices/positions serve the voters and their community and it is imperative that they are serving the majority.

In recent elections people have come to question voting machines reliability and how easy they are to be hacked. This is likely why we saw a surge in mail-in-ballots in the past few elections and people should have the right to vote "by hand" instead of leveraging technology that cyber security experts have been sounding alarms about vulnerabilities for years.

In addition to my personal account, studies show that vote-by-mail is superior for the reasons listed below:

Increased Voter Turnout:

Research has shown that states with widespread vote-by-mail systems often experience higher participation rates.

Accessibility and Convenience:

Vote-by-mail significantly enhances accessibility for voters with disabilities, elderly voters, and those with demanding work schedules. It eliminates barriers associated with traveling to polling places and waiting in long lines.

Pew Research Center findings indicate that convenience is a major factor driving voters' decisions, with a large percentage of mail-in voters citing convenience as a primary reason.

Security and Integrity:

Claims of widespread voter fraud associated with vote-by-mail are largely unsubstantiated. Election officials have established robust security measures, including signature verification, ballot tracking, and chain-of-custody protocols, to ensure the integrity of mail-in ballots.

Research from organizations such as the MIT Election Lab, indicate that cases of voter fraud, including those associated with mail in ballots, are very rare.

Efficiency:

Vote by mail can reduce the strain on polling places, and reduce the cost of running elections. It also allows for more time for election officials to process ballots.

Please keep our preferable method for voting that yields a higher turnout of voters and protects our rights to free and fair elections. It is better for everyone, and provides more equity in the voting process to be vote-by-mail (however efforts should be made to better reach those without an address). Any attempt to diminish or restrict vote-by-mail would be a disservice to our democracy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.