

Submitter:

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On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB210

Oregon's vote by mail system allows me to soberly consider all my options as a voter, and encourages civic participation. For that reason, I vehemently oppose this measure.

Here is a personal story to illustrate why I feel so strongly about this issue:

As a young person living in another state, I was excited to vote for the first time. This state required in-person voting. I rearranged my work schedule to get off an hour early, so that I would be able to get to the poll on Election Day. I assumed that my polling place would be the church a half-mile from my residence, the one I passed every day, with clearly marked signage as a polling place. After arriving and waiting in line for 15 minutes, the poll worker told me "I bet you're a Democrat, let me find your registration" (I am a lifelong registered Independent). The poll worker couldn't find my registration, because my polling place was over 5 miles from my residence, due to a bizarrely baroque electoral precinct map. I got back in my car and drove to the alternate polling place, making it just in time to cast my vote.

As an older person, I reflect on how this minor annoyance could have been worse in ways that could have suppressed my vote:

- I might not have had a car
- I might not have been able to rearrange my work schedule
- I might have been Black, making the poll worker's guess as to my political affiliation especially insulting

A civilized society that wishes to encourage genuine political engagement and thought from its people prioritizes removing impediments from that result as much as possible. No record of voter fraud exists that merits the changes proposed in this measure. Oregon's vote by mail system should be held up proudly as an example for other states to follow. Dismantling the system would undoubtedly reduce the amount of democracy in our state.