

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

IN SUPPORT OF VOTING BY MAIL:

I have lived in Oregon for 36 years, and completely support voting by mail. While I initially missed the tremendous sense of unity and patriotism of going to the polls, voting in the comfort of my own home with pertinent information and resources in front of me has proven to be a much more relaxing and comfortable experience. I have also participated in more elections than I otherwise would have.

Convenience: As someone who works full-time, it was always difficult for me to get to the polls during the open hours. Going before work, I never knew how long I would need to wait and if I would get finished early enough to get to work on time. I also often work late and was unable to predict that I'd get out of the office before the time polling closed. It is much more convenient for me to complete the ballot at my leisure and drop it off at a collection box or mail it in. The process takes much less time than driving to a polling place, standing in line, and casting my vote. I also receive the ballot early enough that I can complete it early if I'll be going out of town without needing to make special arrangements to vote early.

Accessibility, inclusion and participation: Voting by mail is also much more accessible for those without easy access to transportation or who are unable to leave their homes. The ballot and all materials are delivered to all voters with a mailing address, and the ballot can be returned by mail as well, without the voter ever needing to leave home. In addition, everyone has an opportunity to vote. There is no limitation of the number of polling places, no need to purchase more voting machines, nor a need to find volunteers to staff the polling places. No one has to stand outside for hours on end in the hot sun or pouring rain, without a place to sit or access to food and/or water. This increases participation in the voting process. I want every person who wants to vote to be able to vote, without fear of missing work or having to endure hardship!

Security: I was concerned about the possibility of voter fraud, but I have been reassured about the data that show that voting by mail is actually more secure and accurate than in-person voting. There has been an extremely low rate of fraud proven in the more than 20 years that Oregon has used postal voting.

Perceived disadvantages: I have reviewed concerns about voting by mail, including meeting various deadlines, requesting a ballot and having it delivered on time, and returning it on time. The expense is also a consideration, as is the security of the

drop boxes or mail and inaccuracy or inadmissibility of the ballots. The rejection rate is also of concern.

When ballots are sent to all registered voters, there is no need for individuals to request ballots so there is no deadline to meet other than when the ballot needs to be returned. The data I reviewed show financial savings with voting by mail. The drop-boxes I have used are attended on voting day, and monitored by cameras in other situations.

Overall, the benefits far outweigh the disadvantages for me.