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

Across the nation trust in our elections is failing. Both sides claim elections were “stolen” and people are becoming distrustful that any elections are not fraught with fraud. It is vitally important that we restore people’s faith in our election systems. Verifying one’s identity to vote is the most important reason I can think of for requiring identification, yet in Oregon there is no requirement. This requirement alone would go a long way in restoring trust in elections.

Some people argue that requiring ID disenfranchises voters. This does not seem like a relevant argument given the large number of instances where providing ID is already required and we do not hear an outcry against it. Over the past year or so I have been asked to provide identification for routine purchases of specific items, visits to health care providers, to apply for insurance, and even to begin new utility service. All of these requests are allowed in the state of Oregon. Since they are not illegal here I must assume that Oregon feels there is an overriding reason why the need for ID takes precedence over the small risk of some members not receiving services. It should be the same with voting. Restoring in person voting with photo ID verification would dispel many of the fraud claims. Further, SB 210 still allows for requests for absentee ballots for those unable to vote in person.

Another aspect of SB 210 is that ballots must be received by election day in order to be counted. Oregon, and specifically certain counties, have become jokes in the nation given the extended amount of time it takes to count ballots. This needs to change. Whether or not there is fraud related to this practice, there is the perception that fraud is occurring, particularly when days after the election races suddenly “flip”. While this aspect of the bill is receiving less attention than the ID aspect, it is also an important step to take to help restore people’s trust in our elections.

For these reasons I support SB 210.

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