

Submitter: John Fraser

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB210

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to Oregon SB 210, which seeks to make in-person voting on Election Day the standard method for conducting elections. I strongly urge you to preserve Oregon's mail-in voting system due to its proven track record of promoting broad and equitable participation.

1. Oregon's Mail-in Voting Enhances the Democratic Process

Mail-in ballots allow every Oregonian the opportunity to engage more thoughtfully in the voting process. By receiving ballots well in advance of Election Day, voters can research, consider, and reflect on the candidates and the issues without the pressure of a last-minute rush. This thoughtful engagement helps inform better decisions and increases confidence in our democratic process. Voting should not be about how quickly one can cast a ballot; it should center on making the most informed choices possible.

2. Families and Caregivers Benefit from Voting by Mail

For parents and guardians, Election Day can be filled with responsibilities that make it difficult to stand in line or travel to polling locations within limited time windows. Voting by mail accommodates child and family care needs, letting parents exercise their civic duty without compromising the safety or well-being of their loved ones. By contrast, a strictly in-person system forces people to juggle scheduling constraints and childcare logistics, risking that important voices in our community could go unheard.

3. Expanding Accessibility and Equity

Oregon's mail-in voting system is a model for inclusivity, enabling differently abled Oregonians to cast their ballots with comfort and dignity. Traveling to a polling place, arranging transportation, and navigating crowds can create significant barriers for people with disabilities. Mail-in voting removes these challenges and helps ensure that physical limitations do not hinder the fundamental right to vote. Ultimately, it is our responsibility to protect a process that includes every eligible voter, rather than reverting to a format that could disproportionately disadvantage those with mobility and health issues.

4. Voter Turnout and Satisfaction

Historically, Oregon's mail-in voting system has resulted in consistently high voter turnout compared to other states. Many Oregonians appreciate the convenience and transparency of receiving and returning their ballots by mail or via secure drop boxes. Abandoning a method that fosters robust participation sends the wrong message about our dedication to an engaged and informed electorate.

5. Preserving Trust and Security

Since its adoption, Oregon's vote-by-mail process has maintained strong safeguards to prevent fraud and ensure accuracy. Signature verification, ballot tracking, and auditing measures have made our system both transparent and trustworthy. Moving to a solely in-person method could actually heighten the potential for confusion and long lines on Election Day, straining resources at polling places and undermining the efficiency and reliability of our elections.

In conclusion, I respectfully request that you reject SB 210 to protect Oregon's longstanding tradition of making voting straightforward, secure, and accessible for all. Our mail-in system encourages informed participation, accommodates busy family schedules, and ensures that differently abled voters can exercise their rights on equal footing with everyone else. Let us continue to uphold Oregon's reputation for electoral integrity, innovation, and inclusivity by maintaining our mail-in voting process.

Thank you for your consideration