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On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB210

Opposition Statement to Portland's Initiative to Restrict Voting to a Single Day

The proposal to limit voting in Portland to a single day is a direct threat to voter access, turnout, and democratic participation. This initiative undermines the core principles of an inclusive and representative democracy by creating unnecessary barriers to voting.

1. Disenfranchises Working-Class Voters and Parents

Many Portlanders juggle work, childcare, and other responsibilities that make it difficult to vote on a single designated day. Restricting the voting period will disproportionately affect those who cannot take time off work or secure childcare, ultimately silencing their voices in the democratic process.

2. Reduces Accessibility for Marginalized Communities

Expanding access to voting, including early voting and vote-by-mail options, has historically increased turnout among communities of color, people with disabilities, and low-income residents. By removing these options, this initiative effectively suppresses votes from populations that already face systemic barriers to participation.

3. Increases Risks of Long Lines and Logistical Failures

A single-day voting system would create unnecessary strain on election infrastructure. Long lines, delays, and potential technical failures could lead to voter frustration and disenfranchisement. Early voting and extended access help distribute voter turnout over time, reducing congestion and ensuring smoother elections.

4. Undermines Oregon's Vote-by-Mail Success

Oregon has been a national leader in secure, accessible, and efficient voting through its vote-by-mail system. This system has consistently led to high voter participation and minimal fraud. Restricting voting to a single day is a step backward, eliminating a proven method that strengthens democracy.

5. Weakens Democratic Participation

Democracy thrives when more people participate. Restricting voting to one day directly contradicts efforts to increase civic engagement and voter turnout. Rather than making it harder to vote, Portland should focus on expanding access, educating voters, and strengthening democratic participation.

For these reasons, we strongly oppose this initiative and urge Portland voters to reject any attempt to limit their fundamental right to accessible and fair elections.