

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

Hello,

I am writing to state my support for the measure to institute in-person voting for elections held in the State of Oregon.

Election security, election integrity and confidence in a citizen's vote being properly counted is a matter of great importance in our country and in our state. Concern over election integrity shouldn't be viewed as a partisan issue. Within the general public, there is a growing apprehension about the integrity of our elections and it appears to be widespread enough that it cannot be called a partisan issue, people from all political walks and persuasions have expressed concern about the results of elections or attempts to interfere with election processes or vote counts.

When a ballot is sent out via mail, it is nearly impossible to determine that the ballot received was in fact filled out by the voter who's signature is affixed to the back. With voter turnout tending to be fairly low, this results in massive numbers of unfilled ballots floating around. It is unreasonable to think that malign actors, local partisan activists, national pressure groups, or even nefarious foreign actors would not try and take advantage of a situation like this and utilize options such as mail theft, mail tampering or what is sometimes loosely called "ballot harvesting" in order to further their goals, to the detriment of not only the result of the election, but also a diluting of the individual citizen's vote.

In-person voting may not completely remove attempts by malign actors to influence elections, and it would be silly to just assume that it will, but it most certainly provides a vastly better chain of custody for each individual vote and ensures that each vote cast are in fact at the behest of the signing voter.

While in-person voting would be a new way for Oregonians to cast ballots, for the majority of states in this country, in-person voting is the normal way of doing things. Voters understand they may need to drive to a polling location to cast a vote, they may need to request some time off work, employers know that they may need to plan for shorter staff on election days, or for more staggering staffing, and generally things run fairly smoothly. For a few years I lived in Arkansas and voted in in the 2022 election that way. Our county of nearly 100,000 people had a minimum of 6 polling places open, including one in the town we lived in, and it was a smooth process with a fairly short time spent waiting in line.

In conclusion, I believe that in-person voting, that requires showing a state issued ID is the proper way to ensure that a citizen's vote is counted and matters, while also ensuring that opportunities for malign actors to de-legitimize the election processes are drastically reduced.