

Submitter:

Griffin Pahl

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB210

I've lived in Oregon most of my life. I was born near the Umatilla and now I live near the Willamette. My family have been living in this state for 7 generations. I love it here, and I am proud to call Oregon home.

Voting by mail is a time-honored Oregon tradition. We were the first state in the nation to conduct elections exclusively by mail, encouraging all voters to be active participants in this democratic republic. In November 1998, 69 percent of Oregonians voted in favor of the vote-by-mail measure. They knew that the people's access to information and power is a democratic imperative. Let's continue to prove them right! Why is it good? Many of us work odd hours, have multiple jobs to make ends meet, go to school, and take care of families. Still, many others have disabilities which would make it prohibitively difficult to physically go to the polls and/or wait in line to vote. We don't all have the time to vote, but we all have the right, and the duty to vote! Our vote by mail system helps improve our voter turnout and empowers voters' voices.

If we remove this democratic feature of election participation, we will be silencing thousands of Oregonians, cutting their voices out of the decisions the state makes. If the people aren't making the decisions, whose state is it we are living in? We must keep our vote-by-mail system! If you don't like it, you don't have to use it! It's an incredibly secure method and a powerful tool to make sure our voices are heard.

"Republic" used to mean a state in which the supreme or executive power rests in the voting PEOPLE via elected representatives. "Democracy" used to mean a government by the people, in which the sovereign power is vested in the people as a whole.

If you vote to take away the voices of other Oregonians, you are voting for a less democratic, less representative, less republican form of government. There are a lot of red, blue, green, grey, brown and pink politics in our state. We might not agree on a lot of things. But we must keep our political system open and accessible to \*all of us\* if we are to figure out and implement what is \*best for most of us.\*