

Submitter: Alicia Brewer

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB210

?I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 210 (SB210), which seeks to end mail-in voting in Oregon. As a resident and voter in this state, I firmly believe that discontinuing our established vote-by-mail system would undermine the accessibility, security, and effectiveness of our electoral process.?

#### Proven Track Record of Success

Oregon pioneered universal mail-in voting in 2000, becoming the first state to conduct all elections exclusively by mail. This system has been instrumental in enhancing voter participation and engagement. For instance, in the 1996 primary elections, voter turnout was 37.8%. After implementing vote-by-mail, turnout in the 2000 primary surged to 51.3%, demonstrating a significant increase in civic participation. ?

#### Enhanced Voter Convenience and Informed Decision-Making

Mail-in voting offers unparalleled convenience, allowing voters to cast their ballots from the comfort of their homes. This flexibility is particularly beneficial for individuals with disabilities, the elderly, and those with demanding schedules. Moreover, receiving ballots by mail provides voters ample time to thoroughly review candidates and measures, leading to more informed decisions. Former Oregon Secretary of State Phil Keisling noted that many voters appreciate the opportunity to study the issues at their own pace, resulting in a more thoughtful voting experience. ?

#### Cost-Effectiveness

Transitioning to an all-mail voting system has proven to be economically advantageous. Between 1995 and 1997, Oregon counties saved over \$1 million on three vote-by-mail special elections. Expanding this system to primary and general elections could have resulted in additional savings of approximately \$3 million during that period. These cost reductions stem from decreased expenses related to polling place operations, staffing, and equipment. ?

#### Robust Security Measures

Concerns about the security of mail-in voting are largely unfounded. Oregon's system incorporates stringent safeguards, including signature verification, to ensure the integrity of each ballot. Over the past 15 years, only one case of fraud has been prosecuted, underscoring the reliability of this voting method. ?

#### Nonpartisan Impact

Research indicates that mail-in voting does not favor any political party. A study by

the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research found that universal vote-by-mail has no significant effect on partisan turnout or vote share. This demonstrates that mail-in voting serves as a neutral mechanism aimed at increasing overall voter participation without political bias. ?

#### Conclusion

Eliminating mail-in voting in Oregon, as proposed by SB210, would dismantle a system that has demonstrably increased voter turnout, provided convenience, reduced costs, and maintained electoral integrity. I urge legislators to consider the substantial benefits that vote-by-mail has afforded our state and to reject any measures that would compromise the accessibility and fairness of our elections.?

Respectfully,  
Alicia Brewer