

Submitter: Jeannette Isaacson
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, which seeks to eliminate Oregon's vote-by-mail system in favor of in-person voting. Oregon's vote-by-mail system has been a cornerstone of our democratic process, ensuring accessibility, security, and increased voter participation for over two decades.?

Accessibility and Equality

Vote-by-mail serves as the ultimate equalizer, allowing all eligible citizens to participate in elections regardless of their personal circumstances. Mandating in-person voting would disproportionately affect individuals who face challenges such as demanding work schedules, caregiving responsibilities, transportation limitations, financial hardships, or physical disabilities. For these Oregonians, traveling to a polling station on Election Day presents significant barriers that vote-by-mail effectively eliminates.?

Proven Success and Increased Participation

The success of Oregon's vote-by-mail system is evident in our state's voter turnout rates. In the 1996 special election to fill a U.S. Senate seat, Oregon became the nation's first state to exclusively use mail balloting. More than 66% of registered voters cast their ballots, a remarkable turnout compared to the 21% in a similar Texas special election and the 56% national turnout in the 1994 general election. This demonstrates that vote-by-mail can significantly boost voter participation. ?
FairVote Archive

Security and Integrity

Concerns about the security of mail-in voting are unfounded. A comprehensive review by the Oregon Legislative Fiscal Office found that between 2000 and 2019, approximately 60.9 million ballots were cast in Oregon, with only 38 criminal convictions related to voter fraud. This equates to a fraud rate of just 0.0000006%, underscoring the system's integrity. ?

Willamette Week

Cost-Effectiveness

Beyond accessibility and security, vote-by-mail is also cost-effective. Between 1995 and 1997, Oregon counties saved over \$1 million on three vote-by-mail special

elections. Had primary and general elections during that period also been conducted by mail, an additional \$3 million could have been saved. ?

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Conclusion

Eliminating Oregon's vote-by-mail system in favor of in-person voting would be a regressive step, undermining the accessibility, security, and efficiency that have characterized our elections for years. I urge you to oppose SB210 and to continue supporting a system that empowers all Oregonians to participate fully in our democratic process.?

Thank you for considering my perspective.

Sincerely,

Jeannette Isaacson