

Submitter: Trenton McKinney
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB210

March 31, 2025

Senate Committee On Rules
Oregon State Legislature

RE: Opposition to SB 210 – Repeal of Oregon's Vote-by-Mail System

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Trenton McKinney, and I respectfully submit this testimony in strong opposition to SB 210. This bill proposes to dismantle Oregon's long-standing and nationally respected vote-by-mail system in favor of mandatory in-person voting and voter ID requirements. This is a regressive step that would undermine voter access, reduce turnout, and introduce unnecessary barriers to a process that has been proven secure and effective.

State Senator David Brock Smith's disingenuous and pandering sponsorship of SB 210, in alignment with the convicted felon President Trump's recent executive order, raises serious concerns. This proposal is a transparent attempt to curry favor with a national partisan agenda that has repeatedly sought to erode democratic participation. The President's directive to impose stricter identity verification and alter vote-by-mail deadlines represents an overreach that undermines state autonomy in election administration. Oregon has a proven record of conducting secure elections and should not compromise its integrity to serve political theatrics rooted in unfounded claims.

The notion that vote-by-mail is vulnerable to widespread fraud has been repeatedly disproven. A comprehensive database maintained by the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, documents only 1,489 proven instances of voter fraud in the U.S. between 1982 and 2024. Of these, a minuscule number involved mail-in ballots. According to the Oregon Secretary of State's office, there were only about a dozen cases of voter fraud out of more than 100 million ballots cast since the state adopted vote-by-mail.

In addition to its security, vote-by-mail enhances accessibility. Oregon consistently ranks among the top states for voter turnout. The University of Florida's Election Lab reports that Oregon and Washington have averaged over 75 percent turnout in recent presidential elections. Oregon's vote-by-mail system allows voters to research

candidates and issues in the privacy of their own homes, reduces barriers for working individuals, seniors, people with disabilities, and rural residents, and ensures that casting a ballot is a deliberate and informed act.

Replacing this gold-standard system with an inflexible in-person model would disenfranchise voters who rely on the convenience and accessibility of mail-in voting. Furthermore, SB 210's exclusion of overseas, military, and out-of-state voters from these restrictions is an implicit admission that mail-in voting is secure enough to trust in those cases. That same trust should be extended to all Oregonians.

Efforts to restrict vote-by-mail, framed under the guise of election integrity, are part of a broader national trend where partisan actors seek to limit participation and control electoral outcomes. Oregon must stand firmly against this erosion of democratic principles.

I urge the committee to reject SB 210 and continue to support Oregon's trusted, secure, and inclusive vote-by-mail system.

Sincerely,

Trenton McKinney
Portland, Oregon