

Submitter:

Zia Shonk

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB210

Mail-in voting has long been a cornerstone of Oregon's electoral system, offering numerous advantages that strengthen the democratic process. Oregon was the first state to adopt a statewide vote-by-mail system in 2000, and since then, it has become a model for other states looking to expand access to the ballot box. The system is designed to make voting more accessible, secure, and efficient, benefiting both voters and election administrators alike.

One of the primary benefits of mail-in voting in Oregon is increased accessibility. By allowing people to vote from the comfort of their homes, mail-in voting removes significant barriers to participation. This is particularly important for individuals with mobility issues, those living in remote areas, and people with demanding work schedules. In Oregon, everyone is eligible to vote by mail, eliminating the need to wait in long lines at polling stations, which can be a significant deterrent, particularly during busy elections. Additionally, voters are able to take their time reviewing candidates and issues, as they are not under pressure to make decisions in a crowded polling booth.

Mail-in voting also promotes higher voter turnout, an essential feature of a thriving democracy. Studies consistently show that when voting is made easier and more convenient, more people participate. Oregon's vote-by-mail system has led to some of the highest voter turnout rates in the country, with a large percentage of eligible voters casting ballots in every election. By removing logistical barriers such as transportation and time constraints, the system encourages broader participation, ensuring that more voices are heard.

Furthermore, mail-in voting enhances the accuracy and security of elections. The state has implemented several safeguards to ensure that ballots are properly counted and that voter identity is verified. Each mail-in ballot must be signed by the voter, and signatures are checked against those on file. In addition, Oregon's election officials have implemented a robust system of tracking ballots, ensuring that every vote is counted accurately and transparently. Voters can also check the status of their ballot online to confirm that it has been received and counted, providing greater confidence in the integrity of the election process.

Another key advantage of mail-in voting is that it allows for a more efficient election process. Oregon's vote-by-mail system reduces the need for in-person polling stations, meaning fewer resources are required for election day operations. This not only saves money but also minimizes the logistical challenges of organizing an

election. Election results can also be processed more quickly, as ballots are already in the hands of officials by the time election day arrives.

In conclusion, Oregon's vote-by-mail system offers a clear and compelling example of how mail-in voting can improve the democratic process. It increases accessibility for all voters, encourages higher turnout, ensures election security, and promotes efficiency in the administration of elections. With these advantages in mind, it is clear that Oregon's mail-in voting system should serve as a model for other states to follow as they work to create more inclusive, secure, and efficient elections.