

Submitter:

PJ Townsend

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB210

I moved here from Mississippi in June. Voting in Mississippi is frustrating, tricky, and in no way easy. That is a direct result of the Jim Crow south. As soon as I moved to Oregon, the civil servants did a flawless job of making the transition painless. I had no idea voting could be so easy and so safe. Having a QR code to track your vote is incredible. Requiring (or making it the "standard measure") in person on Election Day effectively disenfranchises large swaths of the people who live here. Y'all's constituents will be de facto robbed of their right to vote. This is 2025, it's unacceptable for us to apply outdated, blanket rules that restrict voting rights. The fact that political gerrymandering is legal is bad enough. Adding this restriction would only serve to strip citizens of their right to have their voice be heard in politics. There are only a few reasons this would be supported. 1) fear mongering. 2) ignorance (willful or otherwise) of history, voting laws, and/or varying socioeconomic conditions that dictate how people are able to exist in the world. 3) assuming they are not fear mongering or ignorant, the politicians supporting SB 210 must want certain constituents not to vote.

To give the benefit of the doubt, I will assume the politicians supporting this bill are knowledgeable about the history of voting rights - the short and long term affects of voting restrictions, the way in person polling, limited polling places/workers, and limited hours for voting within a single week day affects the communities trying to vote, etc. Assuming the politicians supporting this bill understand the consequences, they must want those consequences. I refuse to believe that our politicians are fear mongering, ignorant, manipulative, and/or malicious.

Since I refuse to believe that, I must believe those politicians are intelligent and well read/educated enough to understand that the only thing this bill will accomplish is preventing people from voting.

I will give a few examples of people this would hurt.

Working class (especially hourly or shift work), disabled people, elderly people, students, the poor, single/busy parents, caregivers, teachers, minorities, and anyone with inflexible schedules. As is always the case, this will have a disproportionate impact on marginalized communities.

If Oregon wants a free and fair election, we cannot put laws on the books that resemble the efforts of the Jim Crow south.

I left Mississippi to get away from that level of political manipulation, intended to dissuade specific groups of people from participating in elections.

Mississippians are having to fight HARD to undo the damage done by similar laws drafted anywhere from 1877 to 1954.

In Australia, it's mandatory to vote.

That is what you should be fighting for. Guaranteeing EVERY citizens right to vote.

As elected representatives of the people, your job is to expand and protect the rights of the humans they are responsible for.

This is a clear attempt to rescind fundamental rights that are core to maintaining democracy.

Respectfully, please don't pass this bill.

I'm rooting for you, Oregon.