

Submitter:

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On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB210

Oregon's mail-in voting is best practice, an absolute godsend to the busy voter, and should NOT be replaced by in-person voting on election day. Oregon voters deserve to continue utilizing the mail-in voting method as their standard method of upholding their civic responsibility to democratically elect their leaders.

I have lived in other states. I have stood in unmoving voter lines in the hot morning sun, balancing my dehydration against my need to go to the bathroom, watching as the clock hands sped toward, then surpassed, the time I should have given up and started my work commute in order to arrive at the office on time. I have also raced evening rush-hour traffic on Voting Day, desperately trying to make the journey from work to the polling station after being held back at the office tackling yet another unscheduled last-minute emergency, hoping I can find parking close enough that I can dive last-minute into that long stationary line of weary waiting voters before the poll workers have to start turning people away. In neither of those in-person-voting scenarios did calmness or patience join me as I frantically reviewed my choices while I sweated in line, nor was my attention fully focused on considering the effect each of my upcoming choices could have on the governing, health, and well-being of my community. When I finally made it into that voting booth, calm deliberation was not a companion to my rushed reading of the ballot's candidate names and the phrasing of the issues. No matter how many times I double-checked my answers before clicking that final submit button in that booth, I did not have peace of mind and I did not give my full attention to the most important task every American citizen has: to elect the members of our government.

My 10+ years of voting in Oregon by mail-in ballot has completely changed how I view the responsibility of the act of voting. Voting is now something I make time for in the comfort and quiet of my own home. I read the Voter Guide from cover to cover, and carefully cross-reference its declarative paragraphs with news articles and op-eds, advocacy groups' pamphlets and political analysts' insights. I have mental space to weigh pros and cons, I make time to get to know candidates beyond their sound-bite ads, and I have time and space and calmness to ensure that each bubble I fill in on my ballot best matches my ethics, my morals, and my hope for the future. I have enough time to double-check each answer so that when I finally seal that envelope, I know it holds my peace of mind as well as my ballot.

Mail-in voting is not just the best option for me, it works for so many categories of voters who would find it difficult to carve out the time to stand in line on a weekday: busy parents, needed caretakers, dedicated employees, hard-working Americans trying to make ends meet. Whether you are able-bodied or disabled, whether you have access to a vehicle or not, whether you have the ability to modify your work schedule or are a prisoner of the time-clock, no one has such an excess of time and

energy that it should be spent standing in a voting line on Election Day when there is a much better alternative that is just as secure and effective. All Oregonians -- and all Americans -- deserve to fill in their ballots in the comfort of their own home, at their own pace, and without added stress. All voters deserve to experience the peace of mind a completed mail-in ballot brings when the you slip that double-checked envelope into your own mailbox or your neighborhood voting drop-box. Mail-in ballots make for more careful and more informed voters, who are able to give their full attention to their most important job as American citizens. I firmly believe that Oregon needs to hold tight to this standard with both hands.