

Submitter:

Greta West

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB210

I am a public school educator, a parent to two school aged kids, and a wife to a man who, every time we take a road trip, looks out at the view, shakes his head, and says "Oregon. Best State in the Union."

I am in the stage of life where I never get to sit down. Working in special education means there's ALWAYS more to do, and having elementary aged kids means they rely on me and their dad for transportation, comfort, supervision, and everything else. My day usually starts at 5:15, and I'm pretty pleased if I get 30 minutes or so to just relax with my husband before I fall asleep at night.

I have voted in every election since I moved back to Oregon in 2008. This is because Oregon values the participation of their population, and understands how dynamic and busy our lives can be. If Oregon had not been a mail-in state, I would have missed several elections. One November, I was in the middle of a health condition that caused me to get dizzy and pass out when I stood up. Another November, I was caring for my mom as we both cared for my dying stepfather. The November of my son's kindergarten year, he caught mono and it took urgent care visits and weeks of him having fevers of over 104 for doctors to figure out what was wrong. There have been many voting months that have been swamped at work, and taking a day is not as easy when the people who will feel your absence are students who thrive and with consistency.

If Oregon goes back to being a vote in person state, I will have to choose between my commitments to my students, my family, and my community and my commitment to democracy as a citizen of Oregon and the United States. Taking the time to vote would mean getting time off work, finding a sitter for the kids, standing in line for an unknown amount of time (which is hard for many people with disabilities and chronic pain), making sure that I wasn't needed as a parent helper or as part of the costume team for the school play, and potentially missing my sons martial arts class. It could cost me over a hundred dollars just to show up and vote in person.

It would also mean coordinating with my sister to help get our mom to the polls (because of course she's our first call when we need childcare)

Last thing!

I really value the opportunity to involve my kids in the voting process. They ask questions and we refer to the voting guide. We look up what each position does, and talk about what I do to decide between candidates. I think that participating in this process is helping them to feel like active members of their state and country, and to understand and look forward to when they can make their voices heard through the

power of their vote.

Please do not take away my ability to participate in our democracy. I value it, and it is one of the things that makes me proud to be an Oregonian.