

Submitter: Todd Barker

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB210

I strongly oppose Senate Bill 210, which seeks to eliminate Oregon's universal vote-by-mail system and revert to in-person voting as the default method. This bill would needlessly dismantle a secure, accessible, and successful election model that has served Oregon voters for decades.

Oregon has been a national leader in vote-by-mail elections since 2000, consistently ranking among the top states for voter participation. Vote-by-mail has not only increased turnout across all demographics but also made voting more accessible for seniors, people with disabilities, working Oregonians, rural residents, caregivers, and those with transportation or scheduling barriers. SB 210's shift to mandatory in-person voting would create unnecessary obstacles for hundreds of thousands of voters.

The bill claims to enhance election integrity by requiring in-person voting and photo identification. However, Oregon's existing vote-by-mail system already has robust security measures in place, including signature verification, ballot tracking, and voter registration checks. There is no evidence of widespread voter fraud in Oregon to justify such drastic changes. In fact, Oregon's system is often cited as a gold standard for secure and transparent elections.

SB 210 would also introduce new burdens for voters and counties alike. It mandates limited exceptions for mail-in voting only if a voter proactively requests a ballot at least 21 days in advance and proves they are "unable" to vote in person. This puts the burden on voters to navigate bureaucratic hurdles and meet arbitrary deadlines to preserve their right to vote. Furthermore, counties would face immense logistical and financial pressures to rapidly establish and staff a sufficient number of secure, accessible polling places across all precincts—an especially difficult task in rural areas.

Additionally, the bill removes the state's responsibility to pay for ballot return postage, effectively instituting a hidden poll tax for those unable to vote in person. This change would disproportionately impact low-income Oregonians and those in underserved communities.

Our democracy works best when voting is convenient, secure, and inclusive. SB 210 would move Oregon backward by suppressing participation, increasing administrative complexity, and dismantling a system that Oregonians trust. I urge legislators and

voters alike to reject this harmful proposal and protect the proven, effective vote-by-mail process that has empowered Oregon's electorate for over two decades.