

Elaine Jenkins

Testimony for SB 210

Makes in-person voting on the date of an election the standard method for conducting an elections

When I was a child, my father took my brother and me to the cafeteria at my grade school where he voted for the first time. He was a newly naturalized citizen of the US. He was from Great Britain where one needed to be 21 years old to vote and he was drafted into the Royal Navy before his birthday in 1938, He was out of the country until 1946. In 1948 he and my American mother returned to the US. The day he voted, my mom was working as a poll worker. After he voted, we walked home and he fixed dinner for us that night-it was bacon and eggs, his specialty.

Voting has always been important to me. I voted at that school until McKay High School was chosen as our polling place, as the expanding population required a larger space. Voting was a sacrament to me. I liked the gathering of people, my neighbors and strangers gathered to exercise our right and duty to participate in choosing the people who represent us and to give permission about the laws and taxes that would govern us. Needless to say I was not really happy about voting by mail.

As life happens my father and parents had gotten older. My mother died in 1999 and my dad was in his 80s. As the years progressed, his health declined rapidly. It soon became clear to me that showing up at a polling place with his oxygen tank, walker and or wheelchair would be prohibitive to him. I was fortunate to be able to live with him in these years and retire to care for him as his health declined and he needed me around more. Once, we stopped at the county clerks office on the way home from a doctor's office, and explained to them that his signature had changed because of his age and they were wonderful. They came out to the car and helped him sign a new signature card. Because of vote by Mail, my dad was able to vote every election until his death.

My father was far from unique. Not only will I face these challenges as I age, senior and disabled people sometimes do not know what they will be able to do until they get up in the morning. These issues are magnified during the last few years by the chaos in other states has strengthened my appreciation for Oregon's voting system. Oregon's system is finely tuned and well run. And despite the recent issues with the DMV, there very few people who don't obey the rules. Changing to a in person voting system will deny citizens of Oregon their right to vote in our state. Please vote against advancing this bill.