

Submitter:

Chris R

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB210

I am writing in support of in person voting as the standard. In Oregon, we have what I believe to be a good system for accurately counting ballots once they are received by mail. Election workers, in my experience, are very committed to the integrity of the vote, making sure that each ballot received is accurately counted, and I believe they do a great job. The trouble for me is that our mail-in voting process is based on the honor system. I'll explain what I mean: there is literally no possible way to verify who filled out the original ballot and placed that ballot in the envelope - which is then signed and mailed. The best we can do is verify that the signature on the envelope received is the same signature that we believe we've previously received from that particular citizen. But we assume that the person who filled out the ballot is the same person who signed the last signature card, and there is no way to know for sure that this is accurate. I believe this is a major flaw in an otherwise solid voting system. But the flaw is significant enough that there's no way to know for sure that the outcome of the vote is the will of the people. For any election. If someone fraudulently fills out a ballot, as long as the signature on the outside of the envelope matches, we would have no way of identifying that vote as fraudulent. You can say it doesn't happen, but that misses the point. The point is that we have a flawed system where it can happen and we'd never know. Where the honor system is used, there will always be some number of people who will gladly take advantage of the system in a way that benefits them. We make the assumption that the number of people abusing this system is not enough to sway the outcome of an election, but there is literally no way to know whether all of the votes being counted are legitimate, nor is there any way to estimate potential fraud done in this way. In person voting with government issued ID checked would correct this flaw and would therefore greatly increase the integrity of the vote in Oregon. Mail in voting could still be used as the exception, of course, but if it were "opt in" with some kind of validation it would likely be much less likely to be abused. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my opinion.