

Submitter:

Andrew Heithaus

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB210

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Oregon Senate Bill 210, which seeks to make in-person voting on Election Day the standard method for conducting elections. This proposal represents a significant step backward for our state, undermining the accessibility, efficiency, and inclusivity that have defined Oregon's election system for decades.

Oregon has been a pioneer in vote-by-mail, a system that has proven to be secure, cost-effective, and widely popular among voters. By requiring in-person voting, SB 210 would create unnecessary barriers for many Oregonians, including those with disabilities, individuals with demanding work schedules, and rural residents who may face long travel distances to polling places. These barriers could lead to lower voter turnout and disenfranchise communities that already face challenges in accessing the ballot box.

Furthermore, the proposed requirement for government-issued photo identification adds another layer of complexity and potential exclusion. Studies have shown that such requirements disproportionately affect marginalized groups, including low-income individuals and people of color, who may face difficulties obtaining the necessary documentation.

Oregon's vote-by-mail system has been a model for the nation, demonstrating that elections can be both secure and accessible. There is no evidence to suggest that transitioning to in-person voting would enhance election integrity. Instead, it risks eroding public trust in our democratic process by making voting less convenient and more restrictive.

I urge you to reject SB 210 and uphold Oregon's commitment to a fair and accessible election system. Let us continue to lead the way in ensuring that every eligible voter has the opportunity to participate in our democracy without unnecessary obstacles. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Andrew Heithaus