

Submitter: Samantha Barish
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB210

My name is Samantha Barish, and I am a lifelong Oregonian. After spending five years living in Vancouver, Washington, my family returned to Oregon last summer to raise our child in Portland—a city we love and are proud to call home. I'm writing today as a Multnomah County resident, lifelong Oregonian, and citizen of the United States to express my strong opposition to any proposal that would make in-person voting the default method in Oregon.

Oregon has long been a national leader in accessible elections, and our vote-by-mail system is central to that success. Undermining or replacing it with in-person voting requirements would reduce participation, create unnecessary barriers, and strain both voters and election administrators.

Vote-by-mail is not just convenient—it's essential. Many voters face obstacles that make in-person voting difficult or impossible: long work hours, limited access to transportation, caregiving duties, disabilities, or health concerns. For them, receiving and returning a ballot from home ensures they can participate in our democracy without added hardship.

Oregon's system is secure, cost-effective, and trusted. It has performed exceptionally well for decades and has inspired similar systems nationwide. To scale it back would not only inconvenience voters—it would disenfranchise many of them. Our democracy is strongest when everyone has a fair and equal opportunity to participate. We cannot afford to restrict a system that works so well for so many.

Oregon pioneered the vote-by-mail model, and it has become a national standard for secure, accessible elections. That is something to be proud of. Abandoning that leadership by limiting vote-by-mail would be a disservice to the voters who depend on it and a betrayal of the inclusive values that make our system work.

As a parent, a working professional, and a dedicated Oregonian, I urge this committee to reject any proposal that would diminish vote-by-mail in our state. Let's preserve and strengthen the systems that make Oregon a leader in voter access and participation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Samantha Barish
Portland, Oregon