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On Behalf Of:

Committee:

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When I lived in California, I often found myself hurrying to vote after work, picking candidates and voting for bills with little to go on besides party affiliation. In Oregon, with vote-by-mail, my husband and I sit down with the voter pamphlet and our computers and do our research together, discussing our decisions with our daughter as we work. Then we each vote with confidence that we know exactly what we're voting for and why, sign and seal our ballots, and put them in the mail. This allows us to be more informed voters, as well as allowing our daughter to witness the process of citizenship. Vote-by-mail also allows us to participate in more local elections and off-cycle elections, the kind of thing I once might have been too overwhelmed with work to bother with. You might call this a luxury, a convenience. But is a thoroughly educated and engaged populous a luxury for a democracy? Given the struggles we face today, I think the answer to that is clear. Giving our voters time and space to do the research and then vote with their heads and their hearts, not their party affiliations, is not a luxury. It's a necessity.