

**HB 3521 as introduced OPPOSITION**

Dear Chair Garrett and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee and express my concerns in opposition to HB 3521,

- Defines “qualified designated voter registration agency.”
- Directs qualified designated voter registration agencies to provide Secretary of State with age, residence and citizenship data and digital signature of each person who meets qualifications set by secretary by rule.
- Directs secretary to register to vote each non-registered person who is qualified to vote and to notify persons how to cancel registration and how to adopt or change political party affiliation.  
Increases maximum number of electors in precinct from 5,000 to 10,000.
- *abbreviated for testimony* Declares emergency, effective on passage.

**Opposition of the bill**

*AGENCIES, now and in the future*

I believe the wording of this bill, with respect to “qualified designated voter registration agency.”, leaves an ambiguous and open ended method for the Secretary of State to expand the number of agencies acting as voter registration offices well beyond the current use of the Department of Motor Vehicles. This grants an unrestrained agency rule making authority.

Unfortunately, I can envision situations where other Oregon government offices and agencies dispensing benefits such as health care, food stamps, housing assistance and other such support programs would be utilized to gather and submit additional information to the Secretary of State to further increase the number of 'automatically' enrolled registered voters.

The greater number of methods of automatically registering voters represents a potential and predictable increase in the number of opportunities for unqualified electors to be registered. Agency and department functions should not be expanded beyond their mandated scope.

*OPT IN v. OPT OUT*

The bill proposes an OPT OUT methodology. It strains the imagination that there would be very well defined regulation on electronic e-mail newsletters and other types of online lists that require an OPT IN method with a disclosure of how to opt out in the fine print. I am unaware of any other government process that does not require an opt in methodology.

Voting is a privilege of citizenship that should be treated with greater degree of respect and value than is placed upon junk e-mail.

*VOTER REGISTRATION FRAUD, intentional or unintentional*

I see no provisions for the methods by which the Secretary of State and County Election officials are to audit and confirm the citizenship of potential registered voters. Mistakes can and do happen with staff who make incorrect assumptions about citizenship status. The methods to verify citizenship and separate records must be reinforced.

As a legal immigrant and now a naturalized US citizen, I was asked by an employee in an INS office if I was lost or in the wrong office. I had no accent and my physical appearance did not lead the employee to the conclusion

that I was not a US citizen when I walked into the waiting room and took a numbered ticket to establish my place in the queue to speak with INS personnel.

If it happened to me, in an INS office, it is very possible, and even likely, that at some time or another, a well intentioned employee of the State of Oregon could conceivably repeat the same errors and inadvertently miscode a person's eligibility to be a voter.

With the recent passage of the Driver Card legislation, illegal immigrants now have access to an Oregon issued document and the possibility of registering non-citizens to vote is inevitable.

### *CITIZENSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES*

Becoming a US citizen was a deliberate and solemn process I went through to have the opportunity to vote for elected official I wished to guard and represent my interests at the local, state and federal levels of government. I ardently view my voter registration as a contract between me and my fellow citizens and worth much more than the small effort it takes to exercise and maintain that privilege.

The universal disbursement of voter registration is equivalent to devaluing the privilege of voting.

That given by government freely is taken for granted. My vote means more than what this bill seeks to establish.

### **Conclusion**

There are many ways that the Secretary of State could encourage voter registrations to increase in number.

- The bill represents a granting of authority to the Secretary of State to make the rules for designating agencies.
- Voter registration should not become just another dispensed item, by any State agency.
- **Every voter registration process of government must remain opt in versus opt out, voter registration has more value than e-mail newsletters.**
- **The potential for voter registration fraud, intentional or inadvertent is facilitated by this bill.**
- **There recent introduction of the “driver card” for persons with no legal right of presence in the United States increases the potential for fraudulent voter registration.**
- The value of citizenship and responsibility to vote is diminished by this bill.
- The declaration of an emergency does not serve the citizens of Oregon. It only expedites the implementation of poor policy and practice.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee and I strongly urge you to vote NO on HB3521. I would be happy to answer any further questions you may have.

Sincerely and Respectfully,

Christine L Ruck