

Testimony against SB1581

Senate Committee on Rules

Mon, March 3, 2014 8:30 AM

Members:

Sen. Diane Rosenbaum, Chair
Sen. Ted Ferrioli, Vice Chair
Sen. Bruce Starr
Sen Lee Beyer
Sen. Ginny Burdick

I strongly oppose the passage of SB1581 as amended. This bill is similar to HB3175, which died in your committee in the 2013 Regular Session.

The purpose of this bill is to endlessly “remind” college students in the state's community and university system to register to vote. This is undertaken by links on college web pages, contact via email, and contact via class time presentations.

This is wrong in so many ways! Voting is a responsibility of our citizens. These students are responsible enough to make it to class on time, study, take (and presumably pass) tests and course work, and get their degrees. They should be able to be responsible enough to register to vote. We should not put the responsibility of “nagging them” on the school administration, or on the backs of the taxpayers.

I would also appeal to the committee to ask themselves – why is the public college student so special? Why should they be singled out for the hand holding they will receive if this bill becomes law? Why does the cost of the nagging fall on the financially strapped state college system? How can the web pages, emails, and presenters of the materials during college courses determine if students are actually eligible to vote in Oregon? How will it determine which students are registered in other states? College students are always pulling pranks – how will this privilege of registering to vote, and subsequently voting, not be a subject of these pranks? What safeguards will be in place?

Additionally, as amended, section 5B adds wording which I believe makes the student government “or equivalent” TAKE THE PLACE OF either a county clerk or the US post office, who are to determine how to distribute ballots. This cannot be permitted.

“(b) Work with the school’s official student government or its equivalent to develop an internal delivery system policy to help students receive ballots in a timely manner.”

Additionally, although the purpose of this bill is to provide information to students about registering to vote, no where does this bill communicate the actual law or applicable penalty regarding registering to vote in two or more states. Since portions of this bill are directed to students living in on-campus housing, the likelihood of duplicate voter registration may be very high.

I urge you to vote NO on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

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