



OREGON STATE SENATE

March 3, 2014
Senate Committee on Rules
Senate Bill 1581 -6

The goal of this bill is to increase student voter participation on public university and college campuses. For a number of reasons, there are some barriers to doing this.

SB 1581 helps address these barriers in a practical way. It allows colleges and students to work together to register students and provide unbiased information about voter registration.

If there's an onus on helping students find information about how to participate, it falls mostly on student governments—not on the universities or colleges. That was important to me.

If student governments at our schools want to do this non-partisan work to engage a population of citizens, then why not ensure all of our public institutions of higher learning are giving them necessary access?

Students are a highly mobile population, often moving multiple times a year. That's why it's extremely beneficial for them and for our democratic process to be able to keep their voting eligibility current.

While some campuses are great at giving students these access points, most of that is granted through relationships with administrators rather than by certainty. Students would like assurance that they can do the basic, direct service of registering peers to vote on college campuses.

These civic engagement activities fall in line with our campuses' mission statements and with our own ideals of producing a highly educated and engaged citizenry.

SB 1581 -6 does the following:

- Directs universities and community colleges to give the school's student government opportunities to provide non-partisan voter registration services during:
 - Student orientation programs
 - Campus welcome week events
 - Residence life program activities



Dorm residents are historically the most unlikely to return a ballot or update their address, so it's important to reach out to these students.

This amendment also gives student governments the professional contact information - already compiled by institutions - in order to ask faculty members if they can come to one of their classes to talk about voter registration.

It directs schools with students living in campus housing to engage local election offices and students to develop systems that help students receive ballots in a timely manner.

Lastly, this bill will ask campuses to remind students (through electronic mail) of important voting deadlines. As a parent of a teenager, I can attest to the fact that you sometimes need to remind young people of important deadlines.