

# Senate Bill 572

Sponsored by Senator DEMBROW, Representative HOYLE

## SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Requires state to pay for postage prepaid return identification envelopes provided to electors for each primary, general or statewide special election. Grants counties, cities and districts option of providing postage prepaid return identification envelopes for local elections held on other dates.

## A BILL FOR AN ACT

1  
2 Relating to postage for ballots; creating new provisions; and amending ORS 254.470, 260.665 and  
3 545.163.

4 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

5 **SECTION 1. Section 2 of this 2015 Act is added to and made a part of ORS chapter 254.**

6 **SECTION 2. (1) For each primary, general or statewide special election held in this state,**  
7 **the return identification envelope provided to an elector under ORS 254.470 must have post-**  
8 **age prepaid. The expense shall be borne by the state.**

9 **(2) For an election held by a county, city or district on a date other than the date of an**  
10 **election described in subsection (1) of this section, the county, city or district may provide**  
11 **postage prepaid return identification envelopes.**

12 **SECTION 3. ORS 254.470 is amended to read:**

13 254.470. (1) The Secretary of State by rule shall establish requirements and criteria for the  
14 designation of places of deposit for the ballots cast in an election. The rules shall also specify the  
15 dates and times the places of deposit must be open and the security requirements for the places of  
16 deposit. At a minimum, the places designated under this section shall be open on the date of the  
17 election for a period of eight or more hours, but must be open until at least 8 p.m. At each place  
18 of deposit designated under this section, the county clerk shall prominently display a sign stating  
19 that the location is an official ballot drop site.

20 (2)(a) Except as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this subsection, the county clerk shall mail  
21 by nonforwardable mail an official ballot with a return identification envelope and a secrecy envel-  
22 ope not sooner than the 20th day before the date of an election and not later than the 14th day  
23 before the date of the election, to each active elector of the electoral district as of the 21st day  
24 before the date of the election.

25 (b) If the county clerk determines that an active elector of the electoral district as of the 21st  
26 day before the date of the election does not receive daily mail service from the United States Postal  
27 Service, the county clerk shall mail by nonforwardable mail an official ballot with a return iden-  
28 tification envelope and a secrecy envelope to the elector not sooner than the 20th day before the  
29 date of an election and not later than the 18th day before the date of the election.

30 (c) In the case of ballots to be mailed to addresses outside this state to electors who are not  
31 military or overseas electors, the county clerk may mail the ballots not sooner than the 29th day

**NOTE:** Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter [*italic and bracketed*] is existing law to be omitted.  
New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 before the date of the election.

2 (3) For an election held on the date of a primary election:

3 (a) The county clerk shall mail the official ballot of a major political party to each elector who  
 4 is registered as being affiliated with the major political party as of the 21st day before the date of  
 5 the election.

6 (b) The county clerk shall mail the official ballot of a major political party to an elector not  
 7 affiliated with any political party if the elector has applied for the ballot as provided in this sub-  
 8 section and that party has provided under ORS 254.365 for a primary election that admits electors  
 9 not affiliated with any political party.

10 (c) An elector not affiliated with any political party who wishes to vote in the primary election  
 11 of a major political party shall apply to the county clerk in writing. The application shall indicate  
 12 which major political party ballot the elector wishes to receive. Except for electors described in  
 13 subsection (4) of this section, and subject to ORS 247.203, the application must be received by the  
 14 county clerk not later than 5 p.m. of the 21st day before the date of the election.

15 (d) If the primary election ballot includes city, county or nonpartisan offices or measures, the  
 16 county clerk shall mail to each elector who is not eligible to vote for party candidates a ballot  
 17 limited to those offices and measures for which the elector is eligible to vote.

18 (4) For each elector who updates a voter registration after the deadline in ORS 247.025, the  
 19 county clerk shall make the official ballot, the return identification envelope and the secrecy en-  
 20 velope available either by mail or at the county clerk's office or at another place designated by the  
 21 county clerk. An elector to whom this subsection applies must request a ballot from the county  
 22 clerk.

23 (5) The ballot shall contain the following warning:  
 24

---

25  
 26 Any person who, by use of force or other means, unduly influences an elector to vote in any  
 27 particular manner or to refrain from voting is subject to a fine.  
 28

---

29  
 30 (6)(a) Upon receipt of any ballot described in this section, the elector shall mark the ballot, sign  
 31 the return identification envelope supplied with the ballot and comply with the instructions provided  
 32 with the ballot.

33 (b) The elector may return the marked ballot to the county clerk by United States mail or by  
 34 depositing the ballot at the office of the county clerk, at any place of deposit designated by the  
 35 county clerk or at any location described in ORS 254.472 or 254.474.

36 (c) The ballot must be returned in the return identification envelope. *[If the elector returns the*  
 37 *ballot by mail, the elector must provide the postage.]*

38 (d) Subject to paragraph (e) of this subsection, if a person returns a ballot for an elector, the  
 39 person shall deposit the ballot in a manner described in paragraph (b) of this subsection not later  
 40 than two days after receiving the ballot.

41 (e) A ballot must be received at the office of the county clerk, at the designated place of deposit  
 42 or at any location described in ORS 254.472 or 254.474 not later than the end of the period deter-  
 43 mined under subsection (1) of this section on the date of the election.

44 (7) An elector may obtain a replacement ballot if the ballot is destroyed, spoiled, lost or not  
 45 received by the elector. Replacement ballots shall be issued and processed as described in this

1 section and ORS 254.480. The county clerk shall keep a record of each replacement ballot provided  
2 under this subsection. Notwithstanding any deadline for mailing ballots in subsection (2) of this  
3 section, a replacement ballot may be mailed, made available in the office of the county clerk or made  
4 available at one central location in the electoral district in which the election is conducted. The  
5 county clerk shall designate the central location. A replacement ballot need not be mailed after the  
6 fifth day before the date of the election.

7 (8) A ballot shall be counted only if:

8 (a) It is returned in the return identification envelope;

9 (b) The envelope is signed by the elector to whom the ballot is issued; and

10 (c) The signature is verified as provided in subsection (9) of this section.

11 (9) The county clerk shall verify the signature of each elector on the return identification en-  
12 velope with the signature on the elector's registration card, according to the procedure provided by  
13 rules adopted by the Secretary of State. If the county clerk determines that an elector to whom a  
14 replacement ballot has been issued has voted more than once, the county clerk shall count only one  
15 ballot cast by that elector.

16 (10) At 8 p.m. on election day, electors who are at the county clerk's office, a place of deposit  
17 designated under subsection (1) of this section or any location described in ORS 254.472 or 254.474  
18 and who are in line waiting to vote or deposit a voted ballot shall be considered to have begun the  
19 act of voting.

20 **SECTION 4.** ORS 260.665 is amended to read:

21 260.665. (1) As used in this section, "undue influence" means force, violence, restraint or the  
22 threat of it, inflicting injury, damage, harm, loss of employment or other loss or the threat of it, or  
23 giving or promising to give money, employment or other thing of value.

24 (2) A person, acting either alone or with or through any other person, may not directly or in-  
25 directly subject any person to undue influence with the intent to induce any person to:

26 (a) Register or vote;

27 (b) Refrain from registering or voting;

28 (c) Register or vote in any particular manner;

29 (d) Be or refrain from or cease being a candidate;

30 (e) Contribute or refrain from contributing to any candidate, political party or political com-  
31 mittee;

32 (f) Render or refrain from rendering services to any candidate, political party or political com-  
33 mittee;

34 (g) Challenge or refrain from challenging a person offering to vote;

35 (h) Apply or refrain from applying for a ballot as an absent elector; or

36 (i) Sign or refrain from signing a prospective petition or an initiative, referendum, recall or  
37 candidate nominating petition.

38 (3) A person may not solicit or accept money or other thing of value as an inducement to act  
39 as prohibited by subsection (2) of this section.

40 (4) This section does not prohibit:

41 (a) The employment of persons to render services to candidates, political parties or political  
42 committees;

43 (b) The public distribution by candidates, political parties or political committees of sample  
44 ballots or other items readily available to the public without charge, even though the distributor  
45 incurs costs in the distribution;

1 (c) Public or nonpromissory statements by or on behalf of a candidate of the candidate's in-  
2 tentions or purposes if elected;

3 (d) A promise by a candidate to employ any person as administrative assistant, secretary or  
4 other direct personal aide;

5 (e) Free custody and care of minor children of persons during the time those persons are absent  
6 from those children for voting purposes;

7 (f) For persons voting, free transportation to and from places designated for the deposit of bal-  
8 lots under ORS 254.470 or to and from locations described in ORS 254.472 or 254.474; but no means  
9 of advertising, solicitation or inducement to influence the vote of persons transported may be used  
10 with that transportation;

11 (g) Individuals or political committees from providing refreshments incidental to a gathering in  
12 support of or in opposition to a candidate, political committee or measure; [or]

13 (h) The public distribution of registration cards by a person approved by the Secretary of State  
14 under ORS 247.171 to print, copy or otherwise prepare and distribute registration cards, even though  
15 the distributor incurs costs in the distribution; **or**

16 **(i) Providing a postage prepaid return identification envelope for a ballot under section**  
17 **2 of this 2015 Act.**

18 **SECTION 5.** ORS 545.163 is amended to read:

19 545.163. (1) An irrigation district may conduct a district election by mail. The board of directors  
20 of the district shall designate by resolution, not later than the 50th day before any election, that  
21 an election will be conducted by mail.

22 (2) At an election by mail held for the purpose of electing a person to the board of directors,  
23 the qualifications for a director are those set forth in ORS 545.043.

24 (3) An election by mail shall be conducted within the district or divisions within a district ac-  
25 cording to, as nearly as is practicable, the general provisions of ORS 545.137, 545.139, 545.141,  
26 545.145, 545.149 and 545.153. However, the judges of election appointed under ORS 545.137 (2) are  
27 not required to be in attendance until after 8 p.m. on the day of the election.

28 (4) The secretary of the board of directors for the district shall mail an official ballot with a  
29 return identification envelope and a secrecy envelope to an elector, not sooner than the 20th day  
30 before the date of the election to be conducted by mail and not later than the 14th day before the  
31 election. The secretary shall cause to be placed in or on each return identification envelope a  
32 statement to be completed by the elector that says that the elector, under penalty of perjury, swears  
33 and affirms that the elector is the sole elector authorized to cast the ballot. In addition, the secre-  
34 tary shall verify that, according to the records of the district as of the 21st day before the election,  
35 the elector is entitled to vote.

36 (5) When a ballot is mailed to a corporate landowner, a person authorized to act in a repre-  
37 sentative capacity or landowners under multiple ownership, the secretary shall enclose voting in-  
38 structions advising the elector that the voting rights of electors for corporate, representative or  
39 multiple ownerships are as described in ORS 545.002.

40 (6) The secretary of the board of directors may not mail voting materials to an elector who ac-  
41 tually acquires ownership of land within the district after the 21st day before the date of an election.  
42 When an elector has acquired ownership of land within the district after the 21st day before the  
43 date of an election, the secretary shall make voting materials available, and the elector may vote,  
44 only at the district office or at another place designated by the board.

45 (7) When the elector is an elector described in subsection (6) of this section, the secretary of the

1 board of directors shall, before making voting materials available, require that the elector file with  
2 the district a copy of a recorded deed or a memorandum of contract demonstrating the acquisition  
3 of land by the elector within the district. The secretary shall then allow the elector to mark the  
4 ballot, sign the return identification envelope and return the ballot in the return identification en-  
5 velope to the secretary.

6 (8) An elector may obtain a replacement ballot if the original ballot is destroyed, spoiled, lost  
7 or not received by the elector. The secretary shall keep a record of each replacement ballot pro-  
8 vided to an elector. An elector may obtain a replacement ballot and may vote at the district office  
9 or another place within the district designated by the board of directors on the actual date of the  
10 election, during the hours designated in ORS 545.139.

11 (9) Until the time for the close of the polls, an elector may obtain a replacement ballot from the  
12 secretary of the board of directors, at a place designated by the board, if the original ballot is de-  
13 stroyed, spoiled, lost or not received by the elector.

14 (10) When an elector receives vote by mail materials, the elector shall comply with all written  
15 instructions provided, mark the ballot, sign both the return identification envelope and the sworn  
16 statement of entitlement to vote and return the marked ballot to the district by placing the ballot  
17 in the return identification envelope and either depositing the envelope in the United States mail  
18 or delivering the sealed envelope to the district office or another place designated by the district.  
19 *[If the elector returns the ballot by mail, the elector shall provide the postage.]*

20 (11) A completed ballot must be received by the district, at the proper place designated by the  
21 district, no later than 8 p.m. on the day of the election.

22 (12) A ballot shall be counted only if:

23 (a) The ballot was returned in the sealed return identification envelope provided by the district;

24 (b) The elector signed the return identification envelope; and

25 (c) The secretary of the board of directors has verified the name of the elector and the elector's  
26 ownership of land within the district.

27 (13) Using the records of the district, the secretary shall verify the name and land ownership  
28 of each elector. If the secretary determines that an elector to whom a replacement ballot has been  
29 issued has voted more than once, the secretary may not count any ballot cast by that elector.

30

---