



TO: Senate Rules Committee
FR: Nikki Fisher, Executive Director Oregon Bus Project
DA: February 4, 2016
Re: Support for SB 1586

Chair Rosenbaum and members of the committee,

My name is Nikki Fisher and I am the Executive Director of the Oregon Bus Project. The Oregon Bus Project is Oregon's leading organization focused completely on millennial outreach, voter engagement, voter education, and building strong and impactful leadership development programs for our future leaders. Our unique advocacy is organized by young people for young people. We try to amplify the voice of the millennial generation. We are an organization focused on engaging young people in the democratic process by making it fun and accessible. The Bus drives votes, it drives leaders and it drives change.

The Bus Project knows that our democracy is at its healthiest and most robust when citizens can participate with ease and voice their opinions and views through voting.

We support SB 1586 in full. We believe that the increased access for student governments on college campuses to do voter registration is critical because it is that population that is least likely to be registered because they move so much and least likely to be registered by interacting with other institutions. Students' registering other students fosters a healthy democratic society and helps increase participation. Moreover, many college students have limited access to cars and often walk and use public transit for commuting so the more accessible drop boxes the better. We need citizens to be able to turn their ballots in as easily as possible.

My colleagues at the Oregon Student Association will speak more to that so I would like to focus on the business reply mail. This is a simple and elegant solution to a real problem.

Consider this: We don't have any stamps! Seriously, we don't use them.

- We've don't mail resumes or applications instead we email them.
- We don't mail payments; we pay our bills, our tuition, and our student debt online.
- We don't compile our year-end tax documents in a folder we pay our taxes online.
- Mail is simply something that more and more Americans do not use.



According to the United States Postage Service report, A Decade of Facts and figures, the total mail volume of USPS has dropped drastically by 56.3 billion units in 10 years. Americans are mailing fewer and fewer packages and letters and we aren't carrying stamps like we used to.

We believe that requiring a stamp to mail your ballot is a true barrier and we worry not having a stamp dissuades voters from participating in elections. A stamp costs .49 cents today but it does not just cost .49 cents it costs the time it takes to get that stamp as well. Can you make it to the post office between 9am and 5pm while you're working? Do you have time to stop at the grocery store before picking your kids up to get a stamp? If you go to the grocery store, you are forced to buy a book of stamps that raised to \$9.80 this year.

For Oregonians without homes, for Oregonians living pay check to paycheck, and for so many Oregonian's who have very little extra time in the day we know that a stamp can be the deciding factor of whether or not they have the time to turn their ballot in and have their voice heard. We believe that the state of Oregon can make a major difference in voter participation by removing this barrier.

Thank you for your time and consideration.