

March 6, 2017

RE: Testimony in support of Senate Bill 683

Dear Chair Burdick and Members of the Committee,

My name is Bobby Schueller and I live in Albany, Oregon with my wife and son. I'm a social studies teacher here in Salem and my wife is a nurse. This past May, my wife and I celebrated the birth of our son. During that time, we wanted to be sure to cast our primary ballot, as we've never missed an election, but in the midst of working full time and taking care of a new born baby, I unfortunately forgot to place postage stamps on our ballots. The ballots were sent back with insufficient funds.

Linn County has limited drop boxes because it is more of a rural county with a rich history of agriculture and farming. We have 3 drop boxes compared to Corvallis which has almost 3 times that many. In 2012, this became an issue when Steve Trout, Director of Elections, directed people at the post office to not deliver ballots without postage. The chair of the Republican Party at the time, Allen Alley, said this was an issue that targeted rural Oregonians. My family and I share these sentiments. Further, it disproportionately impacts working Oregonians; my wife and my work schedules, combined with our commutes and daycare schedules, make it nearly impossible for us to make it to the Post Office to buy a stamp during the hours they are open. People mention the privilege of voting – it is a privilege - but it should be without barriers.

We know that some members of the Senate believe this to be a non-issue and even have taken to the floor to make fun of people who do not have sufficient postage. We urge these members to listen closely to working families like ours in rural parts of Oregon. My family is not lazy, we know what a stamp looks like, and we care deeply about the future of Oregon and the state our son will grow up in. But we, like so many hardworking Oregonians, can get caught up in the challenges of raising a family, and we do not believe we should be punished for that. Oregon has always pioneered ways to make voting more accessible, and I welcome this bill as yet another example of that.

Thank you,

Bobby Schueller