



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 97-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

March 13, 2017

To: [House Committee on Rules](#)
[Jennifer Williamson, Chair](#)

Re: [HB 2872](#) - Establish request process for voting materials in other languages – **COMMENT**

For the record, my name is Rebecca Gladstone. I am speaking on behalf of the LWVOR as First Vice President in charge of Voter Services and Education, Governance Advocacy Coordinator, as a League representative in the Minority Languages Voting Materials Task Force ([Report](#)) convened in 2014, and as Editor of our League VOTEResources, including [Spanish Voters' Guides](#).

The League consistently supports improving access to voting. One of our priority positions this session is protecting democracy by promoting more representative elections systems. This bill would improve voting access for Oregonians. Our minority populations do not yet achieve the threshold densities outlined in Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, and as described in the Task Force report. Nevertheless, we value Oregon's legacy of being proactive in anticipating needs of our citizens.

We believe the following issues should be addressed before a minority language voting materials request process is established:

- Legislation should distinguish between materials used for voter registration or actual voting versus those used to provide voting information. Considering ballots alone, our counties have produced an estimated 800 discrete ballot versions to serve distinct voting districts.
- With translation steps added, provision should be made to optimize efficient production and to adjust our extremely tight election calendar, with improved coordination between our state, county, municipal and agency elections officials.
- Translation standards should be defined. Translations are not mathematic formulas which, by contrast, can be strictly correct. Translation certification, which can apply to legal or medical terminology, may have little relation to political jargon used by our populace. It may be vulnerable to partisanship concerns by preferring a regional dialect. We should be sure the communities served with minority language materials are involved in the planning and production.

Request processes should be prepared for those needing voting materials in languages other than English, concurrently with materials' development. We don't see the value of establishing a request process before researching, designing, and estimating costs and magnitude of this large project. Given our \$1.8 billion budget shortfall this session, we would not currently support implementation of this larger project.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Handwritten signature of Norman Turrill in black ink.

Norman Turrill
LWVOR President

Handwritten signature of Rebecca L. Gladstone in black ink.

Rebecca Gladstone
LWVOR Governance Coordinator