



March 27, 2017

Co-Chair Manning, Co-Chair Smith, members of the committee:

On behalf of Basic Rights Oregon, we ask that this committee prioritize voter access to information and not move forward with the Secretary of State's proposal to eliminate mailing the Oregon Voters' Pamphlet.

Basic Rights Oregon works to ensure that all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer Oregonians experience equality. The Voters' Pamphlet is the single most important source of accurate and impartial information about the candidates and ballot measures for voters.

We are incredibly proud of Oregon's long history of increasing access to the ballot and electoral information. We believe our march toward creating a more inclusive state is directly linked to our high rate of voter participation. This proposed change would roll back years of success in increasing voter turnout and risk our progress on LGBTQ equality.

Oregon voters have repeatedly supported efforts to increase voter access to the ballot. The Secretary's actions are contrary to the wishes of Oregon voters. The Oregon Voters' Pamphlet is a critical resource created by and for the electorate. Those submitting statements pay a fee to do so and the statements are measured against set benchmarks. The result is a nonpartisan tool that each Oregon voter can use in their homes to make their decisions and participate in democracy.

The Secretary of State has said he wants to engage all Oregonians and increase voter participation, yet his proposed actions would result in less participation--disproportionately affecting, communities of color, rural and low-income Oregonians who are less likely to have access to the Internet at home.

This committee can protect the will of the voters by ensuring the Voters' Pamphlet is printed and distributed to voters in every corner of this state. Please do your part to insist the Secretary find budget solutions that don't discourage voter participation.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony.

Sincerely,

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is "J. M. Haque" and the second is "Amy Herzfeld-Copple".

Nancy Haque & Amy Herzfeld-Copple
Co-Executive Directors