

From the desk of Julie Parrish
Julie Parrish HB 2945



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ATTN: House Committee on Rules

Chair Williamson and members of the committee,

HB 2945 gives potential candidates an extra 3 days to file for public office and file a voter's pamphlet statement if an incumbent legislator withdraws shortly before or shortly after the filing deadline.

This legislation is in response to numerous instances where incumbents have withdrawn shortly before or shortly after the filing deadline for the purpose of "hand-picking" their successor including, especially, the decision of Gail and Doug Whitsett to withdraw after the filing deadline in 2016. However, there have been numerous other instances of this occurring in recent years (Shemia Fagan, Ben Unger, Wayne Krieger, etc).

Because 85 percent or more of the state legislative districts in Oregon are dominated by either the Democrats or Republicans, this practice denies Oregon voters the meaningful opportunity to select their representatives and instead puts that power squarely in the hands of the retiring incumbent.

IPO supports the premise of legislation but do not believe that 3 days gives sufficient time to organize a community response. National news coverage of the Whitsett situation has even caused other state legislatures to consider similar legislation so it is appropriate for the Oregon legislature to respond.¹

Rep Julie Parrish, who submitted similar legislation, gave a 14-day window rather than three days. I note that the Mayor of Klamath Falls, Todd Kellstrom, who organized the community response when the Whitsetts withdrew after the filing deadline and Al Switzer a four-term county commissioner who ran for HD 56 in 2016 have both submitted testimony recommending an extension of the filing period of 14 days rather than 3.

However, we believe that this legislation should meet that legislation "in the middle" and extend the window to 7 or 10 days instead of 3.

Sincerely,

Sal Peralta
Secretary, Independent Party of Oregon