

SB 802 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Rep. Lininger

House Committee On Rules

Action Date: 05/23/17
Action: Do Pass.
Vote: 5-3-1-0
Yeas: 5 - Holvey, Nosse, Rayfield, Smith Warner, Williamson
Nays: 3 - Barreto, Hack, McLane
Exc: 1 - Kennemer
Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact
Revenue: No revenue impact
Prepared By: Erin Seiler, LPRO Analyst

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Allows person who is at least 16 years old to register to vote.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Engaging young voters early and increasing participation
- Preregistration laws in other states
- Importance of voting
- Impact of Oregon Motor Voter Law on access to registration
- Efficiency of capitalizing on young persons' interactions with Department of Motor Vehicles for driving purposes to include voter registration
- Educating voters; having well-informed electorate
- Focus on civic education
- Barriers to participation

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

To register to vote in Oregon, a person must be at least 17 years old and a United States citizen. However, though registered, a 17-year-old will not receive a ballot until an election occurs on, or after, their 18th birthday, when they become eligible to vote. Allowing persons to register before they turn 18 makes it possible for them to vote in the first election they are legally able to participate in, even if their birthday occurs after the voter registration deadline. This is referred to as preregistration.

The central goal of preregistration is to encourage voting among young people because they consistently have the lowest turnout rates. Currently, 11 states and the District of Columbia allow 16 and 17-year-olds to preregister to vote; five states, including Oregon, allow only a 17-year-old to preregister to vote; five states allow a person who is between 17 years and 6 months of age and 17 years and 10 months of age to preregister to vote; and seven states allow individuals to preregister anytime if they will turn 18 by the next election or general election.

Senate Bill 802 allows persons at least 16 years old to preregister to vote. Providing for preregistration at the age of 16 permits young voters to register at an already-established, likely point of contact - the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) - where the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 ("Motor Voter") requires driver's license applications (including renewals) to serve simultaneously as voter registrations.