



Oregon Association of County Clerks

OACC advocates keeping County Clerks accountable

The Oregon Association of County Clerks (OACC) supports reasonable measures that keep us accountable to the people that elect us. SB 670 and HB 3049 don't hold us accountable.

Voter expectations. OACC asserts that citizens expect elections to be open, fair, and transparent. They also expect to know who is managing each election – the people they elect to do the job. Oregon has a long history of conducting elections at the county level by people that are voters' neighbors, people that are available to answer questions, and be personally responsible for the successes and failures of each election.

Changing rules cause confusion and increase costs. If Oregon's election officials have different sets of rules for each election:

1. Voters are likely to be confused and confronted with more fraudulent materials
 - a. Voters will lose faith that they have the correct ballot envelope. Clerks spend a great deal of time educating voters about ballot return envelopes. Having different versions of them will cause more confusion
 - b. Some organizations attempt to make their own "voters' pamphlets" and that creates voter confusion already. If real election officials have to remove content that helps differentiate genuine Voters' Pamphlets, we lose credibility and cause more distrust
 - c. In the era of election misinformation, it is imperative voters know who to trust
2. Election officials will pay increased costs
 - a. The cost to produce materials will increase as many will be forced to have two sets – one set with the Clerk's name and another without
 - b. Clerks that currently save costs by printing several elections' worth of materials in advance will be forced to use more storage space to store multiple styles

Incumbent advantage? If the goal of removing election officials' names from election-related materials is to limit advantages of incumbency, we feel that is a false argument. If a person wishes to vote against a Clerk and wants to ask their neighbors to do the same, what better way than to say "vote against the person on the envelope" or something similar?

Responsibility and Accountability. The reason Oregon moved to print the name of the Election Official (whether Secretary of State or County Clerk) on voter correspondence, pamphlets, etc. was to show who is responsible for the election and who should be held accountable if something went wrong. Printing the name of the person responsible is the epitome of accountability and fosters trust in elections. OACC members continually perform elections with openness and honesty. Placing our name on an election is symbolic of our personal assurance to our constituents.

Charge for mistakes? Many election officials use stock photos, blocks of text and information grids to fill empty spaces in voters' pamphlets. These inserts may contain references to the election official by name. What will the penalty be to a Clerk who mistakenly includes their name in a pamphlet?

Position on removing Clerk's names: The Oregon Association of County Clerks promote responsibility, accountability, and voter confidence. We firmly believe that the name of the election official should be used to authenticate valid election materials and point citizens toward those responsible for managing elections at the discretion of the election official.