

SJR 22 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Rules

Prepared By: Josh Nasbe, Counsel

Meeting Dates: 3/27

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Proposes amendment to Oregon Constitution authorizing persons 16 years of age or older to vote. Refers to people for approval or rejection at next regular general election.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

In its original 1859 form, Article II, section 2 of the Oregon Constitution limited the right to vote to white males who were 21 years of age or older. Since that time, the Constitutional provision has been amended on nine different occasions, in many cases, to expand suffrage.

In 1974, an amendment to Article II, section 2 eliminated a required English literacy test and reduced the voting age from 21 to 18. These changes to the Oregon Constitution followed the adoption of the Twenty-Sixth Amendment to the United States Constitution, Congressional modification of the Voting Rights Act and subsequent litigation in the United States Supreme Court. See *Oregon v. Mitchell*, 400 U.S. 112 (1970) (holding Congress could grant the right to vote to 18-year olds in federal elections, but not in state and local elections).