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To the Senate Committee on Rules  
Regarding SB 116 -2 Amendments

June 12, 2019

Dear Chair Burdick and Members of the Committee

The Secretary of State's Office wishes to express concern about the proposed date for a special election on January 21, 2020 as called for in SB 116. It is a date that presents very specific timing challenges which we believe may negatively impact the participation of Oregon voters.

A January 21<sup>st</sup> election date would mean that the voter registration deadline for the election would be New Year's Eve. The first day to mail ballots would be January 1<sup>st</sup> but there would not be any mail service as that is a federal holiday. As a result the delivery of ballots would be delayed, and the time window that ballots would be available would be shortened. Additionally, the 20<sup>th</sup> of January is a federal holiday and so there would be no mail pickup or delivery. This would also negatively impact the ability of voters to get their ballots back in time to count. This means that the two days immediately preceding the election there will be no mail service due to no mail on Sundays and holidays.

There is a simple solution that relieves most of these challenges. Moving the election date back one week to January 28 will allow voters to have their usual amount of time to receive and return ballots. The January 1 holiday issue will not be a factor, and the MLK holiday will be less of a factor since it is a full week before election day. This also allows the election to be held before the legislative short session which will begin in February. This will also help reduce the fiscal impact of this special election since there will not be as much holiday pay required as there would be if the election date was January 21.

In the interest of promoting the best interests of the voters, and insuring the highest level of participation possible in the democratic process, we would request that the proposed date be moved to January 28.

Thank you for your work on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. R. Vial', written in a cursive style.

Deputy Secretary of State