

HB 2499 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Rules

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Meeting Dates: 4/6

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Extends automatic voter registration to Oregon Health Authority and any state agency designated by Governor that collect the legal name, age, residence, and citizenship information of each person who who meets qualifications established by Secretary of State (SOS). Allows registration from these agencies to occur if no electronic signature is on file and allows SOS to establish process to obtain signatures. Requires notification of each person and processes to decline registration, adopt a political party affiliation, and provide a signature. Requires elector to provide signature in order for ballot to be counted. Requires SOS to coordinate with Department of Revenue to obtain address information from individual tax returns to verify elector addresses in voter registration system. Requires electronic voter registration system to allow qualified individual to register to vote if individual has social security number. Requires system to enable individual to submit electronic image or digital copy of signature. Requires system to allow approved third-party organizations to securely submit registration cards electronically on behalf of individuals. Takes effect 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Automatic voter registration (AVR) is a process where eligible voters are automatically registered to vote when they interact with certain government agencies, most commonly as an opt-out system following interactions with state DMV offices. In 2016, Oregon became the first state to automatically register eligible citizens who are not currently registered to vote when they apply for an original, renewal, or replacement license, permit, or identification card through the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). House Bill 2177 (2015) required the Oregon Department of Transportation, as a designated voter registration agency, to provide the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's Office with the electronic records of each person who may qualify as a voter after a qualifying interaction with the DMV. The law, known as "Oregon Motor Voter," was enacted by the Legislative Assembly to modernize the federal "Motor Voter Act" that required DMVs in most states to offer voter registration services, primarily by asking customers if they would like to register to vote. Under Oregon Motor Voter, if a person is not already registered to vote, they receive a card and a pre-paid postage return envelope from the SOS Elections Division following their qualifying interaction with DMV.

As of April 2020, 18 other states and the District of Columbia have also adopted AVR provisions. In 2017, Rhode Island became the first state to apply AVR to social service agencies in addition to the DMV. Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Washington all have AVR for DMV and other public assistance agencies.

House Bill 2499 extends automatic voter registration to Oregon Health Authority and any state agency designated by Governor that collect the legal name, age, residence, and citizenship information of each qualified person and allows registration from these agencies to occur if no electronic signature is on file.