



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 101-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

March 4, 2021

To: [House Committee On Rules](#)
[Representative Barbara Smith Warner](#), Chair

Re: [HB 3021](#) – Regarding 5 most common languages for Voters’ Pamphlets – **Comments**

HB 3021 addresses the benefit to voters of accessing voting information in their native languages. The League of Women Voters supports the underlying concept of this bill, with specific concerns. Making voting materials accessible to voters in their native languages is of great value in improving government transparency and enabling voter participation. *The League of Women Voters of the United States encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.* In 1974, the League, in coalition, successfully extended the Voting Rights Act to expand coverage to language minorities, in 1978 confirming this under “Principles for the League” to act on this basic right. In 1996 and 1998, LWVUS worked against congressional “English-only” legislation that would have effectively repealed the minority language provisions of the Voting Rights Act. In 2018, our national candidate website, [VOTE411.org](#), went online in both English and Spanish, serving over 5 million readers.

The League calls for a careful review of the 2015 [Report from the Task Force on Minority Language Voting Materials](#). We supported examining “requiring the state and all county elections offices to print ballots and all election-related materials in other than English, depending on certain percentages of minority populations in counties”. That was revised to consider costs, distribution and other issues. The report documented 11 major languages in Oregon.

We raised several issues to the Task Force, given our state-wide *Voters’ Guides* translation experience.

- We recommend a careful review of this bill’s fiscal cost. Translation must be unbiased and nonpartisan. Medical or legal translator certification doesn’t address the need for culturally sensitive, contemporary political nuance.
- The State Library requires a size 14 font for accessible voting materials that we provide to them.
- This bill addresses translation of state and county Voters’ Pamphlets online. Consider that voting materials also include voter registration, ballots, and ballot curing letters as needed.
- The bill calls for biennial review of demographic language representation. Please describe the proposed data source and revise to decennial US Census data unless a better source is identified.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

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