



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.

April 6, 2021

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

Re: [HB 2499](#) – Extend Automatic Voter Registration – **Support**

The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen’s right to vote should be protected and that efficient and economical government requires coordination among the different agencies and levels of government. LWVOR supports HB 2499, to extend Automatic Voter Registration to state agencies beyond the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Since 2013, LWVUS has promoted secure online voter registration, permanent and portable statewide voter registration, and electronic streamlining of election processes. In 2018, LWV reaffirmed commitment to expanding voter registration.

LWVOR is proud of our work toward the vanguard [HB 2177 Enrolled \(2015\)](#), well-known as Oregon’s #MotorVoter law, “OMV”. Drivers’ license information, date of birth, proof of citizenship, Oregon residency, and the signature on file, could fulfill both drivers’ license and voter registration applications. State agencies could share this efficiently and securely. This facilitated automatically registering voters, changing from an opt-in to a more fully inclusive opt-out process. The intention was to expand coordination to other agencies, to cut red tape and improve efficiency with a “no-wrong-door” concept.

LWVOR has worked on automating Oregon’s voter registration since 1981, when registering through the DMV was initiated as a pilot project. We opposed making it permanent until questions of “uniformity and secrecy” were addressed. We participated consistently in 1989, in 1991, and when Oregon had already implemented actions of the [1993 National Voting Rights Act](#).

OMV adoption lacked concurrent political party registration, deferred to a mailed post card, with voter registration opt-out. In 2019, OPB reported, [Oregon Continues To See Increase Of Nonaffiliated Voters](#): “There are at least 300,000 new registrants since 2016 because of OMV” said Paul Gronke, a political science professor at Reed College. “80% or more of these did not respond to a postcard allowing them to affiliate.” Non-affiliated voters cannot vote in many primary election races. Some argue that party registrants could be pressured by a lack of privacy at the DMV. The League urges for privacy in collecting, processing and storing personally identifiable information, from whatever agency or source.

More voters will be registered by expanded outreach. Not all Oregonians have state ID or drivers’ licenses, cued for renewal every eight years, compared to annual filing and collection of personal income taxes through the Department of Revenue. Including the Oregon Health Authority could expand voter registrations further. We urge your support of HB 2499.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Rebecca Gladstone
LWVOR President

Norman Turrill
LWVOR Governance Coordinator