



February 11, 2021

Dear Members of the House Committee on Rules

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2687. My name is Marchel Hirschfield and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO).

Our organization serves the Asian Pacific Islander community throughout Oregon. APANO unites Asians and Pacific Islanders to build power, develop leaders, and advance equity through organizing, advocacy, community development, and cultural work. I am here to express the urge to support HB 2687 Postmark for Ballots, changing the postmark date for ballots to be on election day which will create a more equitable democracy for all Oregonians. Extending this deadline reduces public health risks associated with Oregonians having to return their ballots in person during the window in which it is risky to mail ballots because they may not be received by election day.

APANO has participated in 6 election cycles and we translate materials into seven languages: Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, Spanish, Vietnamese, Hmong, and Somali. APANO has over 6,000 members and partners and we know that there is still a gap in language accessibility when it comes to informing our communities on important information such as the deadline to safely vote by mail. This causes confusion and affects voters of all political parties.

Participation in democracy should be simple and as accessible as possible.

Updating the postmark date would keep Oregonians at home, protecting older community members and the immunocompromised, reducing geographic barriers, and addressing COVID-19 related closures, distancing measures, and postal delays. It would also keep election workers safer, lessening pressure to have results by election night and providing more time to implement a safe way to count ballots.

On behalf of the Asian Pacific Islander community in Oregon, I am here to ask you to vote and pass HB 2687. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Marchel Hirschfield, Political Director, APANO