



Oregon House of Representative
900 Court ST NE
Salem, OR, 97301

RE: Support for Election Worker Safety (HB 4144 -A)

Speaker Rayfield, Leaders Fahey and Breese Iverson, and Members of the Oregon House:

As House Representative for House District 47, I encourage my colleagues to support HB 4144-A. **The bill comes with bipartisan and unanimous support from House Rules.**

The 2022 Legislative Session comes amid a sustained mis and disinformation campaign that threatens Oregonians' trust in our elections. The spread of misinformation and disinformation has created an environment that poses real-world risks to elections workers in Oregon. The bill on the floor today, HB 4144-A, will help protect the people who protect our democracy. This is not a partisan issue. Our elections are run by members of the community in all 36 counties across Oregon, trained professionals and volunteers who are doing incredibly important work in a very challenging time.

In the months leading up to and since the 2020 election, election workers across the country have faced verbal abuse, harassment, and violent personal threats. A [special report](#) by Reuters documented hundreds of those threats and hostile messages to U.S. elections workers. A survey of front-line staff in the Oregon Elections Division conducted in January 2022 found that 10 of the 13 workers responding had experienced harassment or threats while doing their jobs. Elections officials in at least two counties have received death threats.

In response to this environment, I am asking you to support HB 4144-A, the Election Workers Safety Bill. The is a first step to protect our front-line election workers. The bill takes two important steps:

- Exempt the private information, like home addresses, of election workers from voting records.
- Increases penalties for the crime of harassment of elections workers from a Class B to a Class A misdemeanor while performing an election worker's official duties or because of an action taken or decision made during performance of official duties.

The bill comes with bipartisan and unanimous support from House Rules.

We know that election workers are concerned about their personal safety and, after the Secretary of State consulted with the above associations and partners, the provisions in this bill have been identified as a good FIRST step toward improving election worker safety.

As we head into the 2022 election season, we must do all we can to protect election workers against physical harm fueled by misinformation.

From the Desk of Representative Valderrama