

February 15, 2022

Chair Smith Warner, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Fahey, and Members of the House Committee on Rules:

Multnomah County urges your support of House Bill 4144 that takes steps to protect Oregon election workers. These workers are vastly important to our democracy and they are valued members of our team. We should take steps to ensure their safety and well-being.

Election officials across the country are quitting amid threats fueled by false information. One report stated that one third of Pennsylvania's county election officials have quit since the 2020 presidential election citing heavy workloads and misinformation about elections. In a separate survey conducted last year, one in three election officials responded that they felt unsafe because of their job and one in five listed threats to their lives as a job related concern.

There have also been cases where direct threats were made against election workers in Oregon. HB 4144 takes some concrete steps to protect these critical workers by providing workers with some insulation between their professional and personal lives.

Specifically, HB 4144 takes the following two steps to protect Oregon election workers:

- First, it allows election workers to exempt their residential address from public records disclosure, lessening the threat of hostile behavior occurring at their private residences.
- Second, it makes the crime of harassment or aggravated harassment against an election worker a Class C felony, potentially deterring would-be harassers from inappropriate actions and providing workers who have experienced threats with a concrete course of action.

Election workers are part of the critical infrastructure of democracy. Ensuring they feel safe at work is an important step toward protecting this core function of government. Passing HB 4144 is a great way to provide some protection to these critical workers.



Tim Scott, Director  
Multnomah County Elections