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Chair Fahey, Chair Breese Iverson, and Members of the Committee:

I'm honored to serve as Oregon's 28<sup>th</sup> Secretary of State. My mission as Oregon's Secretary of State is to build trust between the people of Oregon and state government so Oregon's public services can make a positive difference in peoples' everyday lives. We build trust in the Elections Division by ensuring secure, fair, and accessible elections at all levels of our democracy. As Oregon's chief elections officer, one of our top priorities is expanding access to the ballot and promoting civic engagement through the voting process. Oregon Motor Voter has been a success since it was implemented in 2016. We can continue to close gap. HB 2107 is a logical next step to further our goal of expanding access.

Oregon's modern, secure and convenient voter registration system is the gold standard in the nation. But approximately 200,000 eligible voters in Oregon remain unregistered and are unable to vote unless registered three weeks before an election. HB 2107 will help Oregon close these gaps.

### **HB 2107**

In January of 2016, Oregon's automatic voter registration law ([HB 2177](#)), Oregon Motor Voter (OMV) took effect. OMV is modernizing voter registration in Oregon by providing a secure, simple, and convenient way for more Oregonians to become registered. But we can do better with a coordinated, statewide approach – starting with expanding automatic voter registration to other state agencies that interact with unregistered populations, specifically those enrolled in or applying to the Oregon Health Plan with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA).

Our initial research shows that approximately 171,000 people on the Oregon Health Plan are eligible to vote but are not registered. OHA regularly interacts with these Oregonians and could stand up a program modeled on the coordination between the Oregon Elections Division and the DMV. We are in preliminary discussions with these entities.

I want to emphasize that we are committed to working in partnership with you and the Oregon Association of County Clerks. We want to make sure our Elections Division and county clerks have the resources needed for these programs and are involved in how we set up these programs for success. We support an implementation schedule that ensures our office can work with OHA and county clerks to take the necessary time to make the new program work. We'd prefer to get it right than to get it done quickly. A deliberate implementation schedule will also give us time to receive the necessary guidance and approval from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. While several other states (Colorado, Nevada,

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Delaware, Massachusetts, Washington, and Maryland) have already approved tying automatic voter registration to government health benefits, we would join them in being the first to implement a program following federal approval.

We look forward to the opportunity to work closely with OHA, the Oregon Association of County Clerks, and partners to build a collaborative process to implement this policy efficiently and effectively.

Our democracy is stronger when more people participate in elections and make their voices heard. HB 2107 will build off the good work of the Motor Voter law, the advocacy of Chair Fahey to expand the program over the last several sessions and continue to decrease barriers for Oregonians to be civically engaged and to exercise their right to vote. For these reasons, I strongly encourage your support.

Sincerely,



Shemia Fagan, Secretary of State

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