

ANALYSIS

Item 1: Secretary of State Oregon Centralized Voter Registration

Analyst: Paul Siebert

Request: Appropriate \$2,000,000 General Fund to the Secretary of State for the purchase of equipment and software upgrades needed to stabilize the existing Oregon Centralized Voter Registration system.

Analysis: The Secretary of State is requesting \$2 million General Fund to stabilize the Oregon Centralized Voter Registration (OCVR) system, which requires new IT hardware and current versions of software upgrades. The OCVR system began in 1995 and is currently hosted on legacy systems using out of date software. Upgrades to the current system have not happened for a number of years because previous administrations planned to replace OCVR with a new system. However, that project encountered numerous issues, and the current Secretary of State determined it would be in the best interest of the state to terminate the vendor's contract and end the replacement project, while continuing to rely on the existing OCVR system.

The OCVR system has historically been supported with federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) grants and some support from counties. No new HAVA funds are expected this biennium, or the next, and county payments support a small percentage of the costs to support the system, having remained largely unchanged since 2005. This means the OCVR program will have to transition to mostly General Fund support in 2027-29 and future biennia. Of the \$2 million General Fund requested, \$1.3 million is for one-time costs of equipment purchases and would not roll-up into the 2027-29 budget, with the remainder being used for recurring support and subscription fees.

Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means recommend appropriating \$2,000,000 General Fund to the Secretary of State system in a budget reconciliation bill during the 2026 legislative session to stabilize the Oregon Centralized Voter Registration.

Request: Appropriate \$2,000,000 General Fund for Oregon Centralized Voter Registration system stabilization.

Recommendation: The Secretary of State is not under executive budgetary authority.

Discussion: The Secretary of State (SOS) is requesting \$2,000,000 General Fund to stabilize the Oregon Centralized Voter Registration system (OCVR).

OCVR is the single centralized official database system of Oregon's registered voters and is used by every county in Oregon. Since the inception of OCVR in 1995, its cost and maintenance have been funded by Federal Help American Vote Act (HAVA) funds. SOS does not have confidence that additional HAVA funds will be allocated by Congress in the foreseeable future.

OCVR is hosted on legacy systems that are higher cost to maintain. The previous SOS administration planned to replace the system, so did not keep pace with upgrades and maintenance. The replacement did not materialize and now the system has increased costs that were deferred. As threats to election security increase, the Secretary of State must also address technology debt and data migration. Given HAVA funds won't be replaced and will be spent down throughout this biennium, SOS expects OCVR upkeep expenses will have to be supplemented by General Fund. In future biennia, if HAVA funds are exhausted, the program would presumably be funded entirely by General Fund.

Legal Reference: Increase the General Fund appropriation made by chapter 610, section 1(2), Oregon Laws 2025, for the Secretary of State, Elections Division, by \$2,000,000 for the 2025-27 biennium.



December 8, 2025

The Honorable Senator Kate Lieber, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Chair
Interim Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street NE, H-178
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Senator Lieber and Representative Sanchez:

Nature of the Request

The Secretary of State Elections Division is requesting General Fund for the stabilization of the Oregon Centralized Voter Registration (OCVR) system. OCVR is the single, centralized, interactive and official database system of Oregon's registered voters.

Agency Action

Oregon began planning and designing an Oregon Central Voter Registration system in 1995. OCVR is used by all counties in Oregon. Since its inception, the cost of OCVR and its maintenance has been funded via Federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) grants and payments from counties.

OCVR is currently hosted on legacy systems that are increasingly costly to maintain. The previous administration's plans to move to a replacement system did not materialize and created an accumulation of deferred upgrades and maintenance. In addition to the maintenance costs, the Secretary of State must now also address significant technology debt and data migration costs to ensure the system remains secure and available as threats to election security increase. HAVA funds have gradually been spent down, and we expect to exhaust the remaining balance this biennium which will require the OCVR program to transition to General Fund. We do not have confidence that additional HAVA funding will be allocated by Congress in the foreseeable future.

Action Requested

The Secretary of State is requesting an increase in the amount of \$2,000,000 to stabilize the Elections OCVR system. This will be used to purchase physical equipment and software upgrades to current versions.

Legislation Affected

Oregon Law 2025, Chapter 610, Section 1(2) increase by \$2,000,000.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Kaplan".

Michael Kaplan
Deputy Secretary of State

255 Capitol St NE, Ste 180
Salem, Oregon 97310

Tobias Read
Oregon Secretary of State

Michael Kaplan
Deputy Secretary of State

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