

In Opposition of SB 210

When we moved to Oregon in 2008, there were many things we loved about our new home. The natural beauty of the state. Public access to the state's coast line. The bicycle friendly infrastructure. But perhaps, most of all, Oregon's vote-by-mail system. Voting by mail affords many advantages which serve the people of Oregon, and I urge you not to return to in-person voting.

Voting by mail makes voting accessible to all eligible Oregonians. It doesn't matter where you live, the job you work, or mobility issues you may have, you can vote at your convenience. Voting by mail means not needing to wait in a long line, worrying about making it to work on time, childcare for young children, or risking your health in inclement weather. It means not worrying about people harassing you at the polling place. Voting by mail eliminates all of these challenges for voters. This increases overall participation and voter engagement, especially from folks who have been traditionally marginalized. The more voices that participate in our civic life, the stronger our society will be.

Voting by mail means our electorate has an opportunity to be a better informed voter. When my ballot comes, I have time to thoroughly research and consider candidates and measures I might not know about, instead of making an uneducated guess in the polling booth or leaving the ballot blank. I have been able to model this for my own children, researching and debating issues around the dinner table prior to voting. When people have time to research their ballot, it means "down ballot" races and measures are less likely to be skipped over.

Voting by mail brings other advantages, as well. Research has shown that voting by mail is a secure system, with less fraud than other systems. Voters have choices about how to return their ballot, and can register for ballot tracking. Elections workers can begin tabulating ballots that have been returned ahead of election night, which not only decreases the time before results are announced, but also makes workers less prone to error by improving vote count conditions. Voters can end the onslaught of election advertising by returning their ballots as soon as they are ready.

If you want to improve Oregon's vote by mail system, a return to in person voting is not the solution. What we need is to include the "I voted" stickers inside people's ballots, not require the inconvenience of standing in a long line. I urge you to vote no on SB 210.

Sincerely,
April Santiago
Damascus, Oregon