



**Testimony of Tobias Read, Oregon Secretary of State
In Support of SCR 204
Senate Committee on Rules
February 4th, 2026**

Chair Jama and Members of the Committee,

Today, we celebrate 120 years of the Association of Oregon Counties, a century-long commitment to the local communities where our voters most directly experience and engage with democracy.

Over the past year, I travelled to all 36 counties to meet with our County Clerks. During our visits, I learned of the unique challenges they face in each of their communities. Many shared how critical their partnerships with County Commissioners are in securing the resources needed to administer elections. At a time when we continue to see cuts to election funding at the federal level, counties bear much of the cost of administering our elections.

As noted in a June 2023 Reed College study commissioned by the Oregon Secretary of State Elections Division, staffing retention among County Clerks is closely tied to compensation levels and job classifications. Counties continue to support election workers by responding to these challenges as they arise, and we deeply appreciate their commitment to maintaining secure and accessible elections.

Additionally, our office values the important role that counties play in economic development. Small businesses are vital to our state's economic health, and we look forward to continuing our partnership to ensure business owners receive the guidance and support they need to be successful.

Counties remain on the front lines of our democracy, and AOC's 120-year legacy is a testament to the power of local service. By continuing to invest in our election infrastructure and our economic partnerships, we ensure that every Oregonian, in every county, can thrive. Thank you for your tireless dedication to your communities and for 120 years of vital partnership with the State of Oregon.