



Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Pham, and members of the House Committee on Rules,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HJR 201. For background, Oregon REALTORS® is an industry association comprised of roughly 18,000 members who work as real estate brokers, principal real estate brokers, real estate property managers, and affiliated industry professionals. In turn, our members represent hundreds of thousands of Oregonians in real property transactions across the state.

HJR 201 is an overdue reform to the way Oregon conducts primary elections. Opening primary elections to all voters is fundamentally an issue of fairness. More than 1.14 million voters are currently unable to vote for many candidates for public office as part of the state's primary elections. That is greater than one-third of all registered voters in the state.

These nonaffiliated voters – now the largest group of voters (37.2%) in the state – have no say in which candidates advance to the general election. More than half (59%) of voters under the age of 35 are nonaffiliated, and these numbers continue to grow. Nearly 70% of Hispanic voters and nearly 60% of veterans are also nonaffiliated.

By opening primaries to all voters, as HJR 201 would do, these nonaffiliated voters would have an equal voice in determining who should be considered for some of the most important public offices in Oregon, including the offices of the Governor, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, and Attorney General, as well as our legislators in the U.S. Congress and State Legislature.

Voters overwhelmingly support opening primaries to all voters (74%). Nonaffiliated voters are the largest voting bloc in 21 of our 36 counties and all but one U.S. Congressional district in the state.

Since the early 2000s, the nation has experienced rapid growth in affective polarization. According to [Pew Research Center](#), members of both major political parties increasingly view members of the other party as immoral, dishonest, and even unintelligent. This makes the serious policy challenges we face in this state – such as housing supply and affordability, climate change, and more – harder to address. Without reform, we are likely to see affective polarization continue to climb.

We can begin to address these issues if our elected officials reflect the true diversity of voters' political views. Reforming our primary elections to ensure all voters feel represented is not only an effective strategy to increase voter turnout, but to reduce polarization.

Oregon REALTORS® urges you to vote YES on HJR 201 so we can begin to bridge partisan divides and craft meaningful solutions to the most pressing challenges facing the State of Oregon and all Oregonians.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our comments.