

Submitter: Austin Sumpter

Committee: Senate Committee on Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: Support for Senate Bill 1509

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Starr, members of the Senate Committee on Rules,

My name is Austin Sumpter. I live in the outskirts of Canby in rural Clackamas County, Oregon, specifically in Senate District 26 and House District 51. I testify today to express my support for Senate Bill 1509, a bill to help rein in the potential threats posed by “faithless” electors starting in the 2028 presidential election in Oregon.

Oregon, like many other states, has been no stranger to baseless attacks on our voting system, and with violence and threats of violence escalating across the country under the current regime, efforts to improperly coerce Electoral College electors to vote a certain way threaten to undermine the will of the state’s voters. But there are cases in which electors may choose to go off on their own judgements, leading to what are known as faithless electors. These electors present a harmful and potentially damaging risk to our democracy, and states that fail to stop faithless electors could find themselves in an enormous dispute that could undermine the results of the next presidential election for our state. Although Oregon already requires electors to pledge to vote faithfully, there is no enforcement mechanism for it.

Senate Bill 1509 would create a mechanism to guard against faithless electors in future presidential elections in Oregon. It would empower the Secretary of State to review and enforce the pledges of Oregon’s electors, invalidating any ballot that does not conform with how the people of Oregon voted. It would also empower the Secretary of State to remove a faithless elector from their position and see to it they be replaced. Two dozen states, including neighboring California, Nevada, and Washington have already passed such laws to guard against faithless electors. This legislation has nothing to do with party politics. It’s about upholding the will of Oregon’s voters, no matter which candidate they collectively choose. Passing this bill will mean upholding the will of Oregon voters and reducing the likelihood that the results of our state’s presidential election results could get overturned. Please protect the voice of our state and the nation’s democracy by passing this bill.