



**Testimony of Tobias Read, Oregon Secretary of State
In Support of HB 4138A
Senate Committee on Rules
February 25th, 2026**

Chair Jama and Members of the Committee,

Oregon's election system works because voters trust it. That trust depends not only on accurate ballot counting and secure systems, but also on the public's experience when interacting with election spaces. For most Oregonians, voting is a straightforward civic act: signing a ballot and returning it at an official drop box, by mail, or at their county clerk's office. That process should be free from fear, confusion, or uncertainty.

HB 4138A establishes a clear rule: during any time when votes are collected or tabulated for a state or federal election, law enforcement officers may not wear facial coverings within 250 feet of ballot drop sites, ballot-marking areas, or voting booths. This bright-line standard strengthens transparency at the precise locations where public confidence matters most.

Election environments must be neutral and free from intimidation, whether intentional or perceived. Masked and unidentified officers operating near ballot return sites or voting areas can create uncertainty about who is exercising authority and why they are present. Even when action for official purposes, anonymity in these sensitive spaces undermine public confidence. If someone has the power to detain or arrest an individual near a voting site, the public deserves to know who that person is and which agency they represent.

For these reasons, I urge your support for HB 4138A.