



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 97-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 28, 2017

To: [Senate Committee on Rules](#)
[Chair Ginny Burdick](#)

Re: SJR 2 – Proposes amendment to Oregon Constitution to allow citizens to register to vote in an election not later than the day before election days. Refers proposed amendment to people for their approval or rejection at next regular general election. – **Support with Comments**

The League consistently supports improving access to voting. One of our priority positions this session is protecting democracy, by promoting more representative elections systems. For decades we have supported shortening the roughly three-week voter registration blackout period preceding elections. Closing access to voting registration suppresses voting. This bill would improve voting access for Oregonians, including for example, our mobile military service members, or students whose addresses often change right before elections.

The League advocates for constitutional amendments with caution. This bill poses a nuts and bolts timeline question, subject to practical considerations. The United States Postal Service delivery timelines may change, affecting ballot delivery. My county allows three days each way. The Oregon Centralized Voter Registration (OCVR) database needs to be nimble with fast connections and follow through, linking the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for new Oregon “Motor Voters” to their new county elections ballot sources. My county allows a week for new registrant verification through the DMV. Fiscal impacts for our county clerks could include the need to allow overtime to process additional registrants. One challenge remains common to us; increasing awareness for our voters of voting issues and deadlines.

One reason our vote-by-mail system has worked so well is that we adopted it gradually with safeguards. We would advocate for an improvement in voting registration access, recognizing current limitations, with an eye to further improvement in the future. Let’s negotiate and discuss narrowing this to a week or two, from the current three week new-registration black-out period before elections.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Handwritten signature of Norman Turrill in black ink.

Norman Turrill
LWVOR President

Handwritten signature of Rebecca L. Gladstone in black ink.

Rebecca Gladstone
LWVOR Governance Coordinator