



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 99-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 18, 2019

To: [House Committee on Rules](#)
[Representative Paul Holvey, Chair](#)

Re: [HB 2685](#) – Relating to filing information provided when running for public office – **Support**

The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends on informed and active participation in government. This requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by (among other things) making public records accessible. We urge that information be reliable and provided in a timely manner to ensure transparency and efficiency. The League collects and assembles candidate information for voters so they can make well-informed ballot decisions. We find this very challenging and assert that it is more important than ever for the voting public to readily have access to candidate information. When candidates file to run for office, certain contact information (address, at least one phone number, and email address) is required, but not always provided. Our access to candidates is sometimes blocked, for example when candidates' filing contact information is redacted. In addition, we do not want to reach out via incumbents' public office phones or emails that are sometimes submitted.


Here's an overview:


Our League software depends on email access to invite candidate participation, for more than a thousand Oregon candidates per election. If there are problems or technical questions, we call the phone numbers they list. District Attorney and Judicial candidates are special cases. The nature of their work is sensitive and personal privacy is often necessary as a safety measure. Candidates should provide contact information that does not need to be redacted from public records. They should not use email addresses issued for their jobs or public/agency telephone numbers. Judicial candidates are not alone in using incumbent information, yet a roster from the 2018 Oregon primary highlights these two problems:

- Of the 134 judicial and DA candidates filing in the 2018 Oregon primary election, 36 provided their incumbent office-related email. We believe incumbents running for re-election should clearly separate the duties of office from campaign communications and activities, with their related expenses, honoring an ethics firewall between them. Candidates should be free to choose their campaign contact information, including personal contact information or dedicated campaign contact information (as addressed in an amendment underway).
- Sixteen judicial and DA candidates provided contacts that were redacted from the public record.

We submit that candidates running viable contemporary campaigns can provide appropriate email addresses without significant hardship. Telephone numbers help us to provide technical support. We urge passage of this bill, on behalf of our voters, who need to know who will serve them in office.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.


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