



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Senate calls for paid ballot postage

SB 861: Removes barrier to voters' access to the ballot box

SALEM – The Oregon Senate voted to remove a common barrier standing between many Oregonians – particularly younger voters and working voters – and the ballot box.

[Senate Bill 861](#) – which passed the Oregon Senate today – requires the state to pay for ballot return envelopes that can be returned by business reply mail, or other mailing service determined by the Secretary of State to be more cost effective or efficient, for each election held in the state.

“Oregon has been a leader in making it easier for people to vote, and this bill is another step in that direction,” said Sen. Michael Dembrow (D-Portland), who carried the bill on the Senate floor. “While some Oregonians have easy access to a nearby ballot drop box, the majority of rural Oregonians have to commute significant distances to access them. It’s also difficult for busy, working families – some of them working multiple jobs and trying to put food on the table – to secure stamps either because of time or added cost. Voting is a right that should be available to everyone who is eligible and Senate Bill 861 removes a significant barrier in the process.”

Oregon is the first state in the nation to adopt vote by mail and this bill builds on that accessibility to the Democratic process. The bill applies to all elections held in the state on or after Jan. 1, 2020. It now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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