



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Online voter registration clears final legislative vote *HB 2386 will help improve outreach to underrepresented populations*

SALEM – Oregonians will have a new and convenient way to register to vote with a bill passed this afternoon in the Senate. House Bill 2386 will create a system of online voter registration that is expected to improve voter participation, especially amongst voters that are traditionally difficult to reach.

“Anytime we make it more convenient for people to participate in the political process, we see more people becoming engaged,” said Senator Richard Devlin (D-Tualatin), chief Senate sponsor of the bill. “Oregon continues to be a trailblazer in encouraging civic participation. This bill is another simple way we can expand upon that reputation.”

Oregon will join only three other states that have implemented or have plans for a system of online registration. Such programs are expected to improve voter participation in underrepresented demographics such as students, minorities, and persons with disabilities. Oregon’s system is slated to be up and running March 1, 2010.

"The Senate has agreed to make registering to vote simpler, quicker and more accessible to more people," said Secretary of State Kate Brown. "Oregon saw a surge in registration by young people last year and the opportunity to register online means Oregon can continue to reach eligible voters who are more comfortable in the cyberworld than with paper. This marks a real step toward keeping younger voters engaged in the process of public policy."

Online voter registration forms have identical requirements to today’s paper forms, with the single exception that to register online a valid Oregon driver license, ID card or learners permit is needed.

“With this system, it will take only a few minutes for registered Oregonians to go online and update their addresses if they move,” said Senator Rick Metsger (D-Welches). “The paperwork and stamp is eliminated. This new option will be especially helpful for younger voters, many of whom move more often than other Oregonians.”

The program will be paid for with federal funds from the Help American Vote Act. HB 2386 was introduced in the House by Representative Ben Cannon (D-Portland) and Representative Jefferson Smith (D-Portland). The bill will now go to the Governor for his signature.

A separate bill promoting civic engagement for young people passed the Senate last week. HB 3473 requires schools districts with public high schools to adopt plans to encourage students to register to vote and to vote in elections. That bill is also on its way to the Governor's desk.

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