

Governance Updates

4/5/2021

By Norman Turrill, Governance Coordinator

Redistricting (Norman Turrill)

This coming Saturday the two redistricting committees will hold the last three of their series of ten concurrent hearings ([see flyer](#) and [website](#)) focused on each of the five congressional districts of Oregon. Oregon law requires ten hearings before redistricting maps can be drawn. It would be particularly helpful for individuals to testify about what they think are the “communities of common interest” in their area. You might also express your desire for an independent redistricting commission.

This week the [Oregon Supreme Court asked legislative leaders](#) about a possible speeded up timeline for redistricting of legislative districts. The legislative leaders replied that they like the proposed schedule. However, Secretary of State Shemia Fagan said in a court filing that she still thinks it is safer to use data from the [Population Research Center](#) at Portland State University. Her concern is about disruptions to the 2022 elections. Nothing has been said about congressional redistricting. When the Supreme Court will issue its ruling is unknown.

In the meantime, the Census Bureau said in testimony to the [Senate Committee on Redistricting on 3/29/21](#) that a “legacy” form of population data would be available in early to mid-August. Then a representative of ESRI, the company that is providing the mapping software for redistricting, said that this is the form of the data that it was expecting to use anyway. So there is no need to wait until late October for the newer form of the census data!

Campaign Finance Reform (Norman Turrill)

On 3/30/21 [House Rules held a simultaneous public hearing](#) on both [HB 2680](#) (Rayfield) and [HB 3343](#) (Salinas, Clem) on campaign contribution limits. The League's written testimony is [here](#); however, the League was not allowed to verbally testify because too many people wanted to be heard. The League believes that there should be no unlimited or huge flows of money allowed, and that other bills on campaign finance also need to be considered so that the whole system is balanced. The amendments that Rep. Rayfield had said he is working on were not yet available, so little progress was made except for hearing a wide variety of opinions.

These are complex bills, but so far reformers prefer the features of HB 3343 and [SB 336](#) (Golden). If we could just collect all the best features into one bill, then we would have significant reform!

Election Topics (Becky Gladstone)

We support [SB 2499](#) to expand Automatic Voter Registration, with an April 6 public hearing. We will comment on [SB 5538](#), Secretary of State (SoS) budget proposals, slated for an April 7 public hearing. We supported [SB 293](#) using our new Cybersecurity position last week. Three elections' placeholder bills are pending.

[HB 2499](#): We support Rep Fahey's bill to expand automatic voter registration, with reference in the Governor's budget. We have been exploring and pushing to expand AVR (Automatic Voter Registration) to the Dept of Revenue since #MotorVoter passed in 2015. League testimony will be posted for the April 6 public hearing.

[SB 293](#) calls for recommendations for the state government to "elevate consideration of privacy, confidentiality, and data security measures."

LWVOR supports this bill with [testimony](#) that cites our new [study](#) and [position](#).

[SB 5538](#): We will comment on this SoS budget bill at the April 7 public hearing, especially for elections.

[HB 2681](#) -3 We support this voter registration bill, [testimony submitted](#) March 11. The SoS and staff support this as a positive step to keep folks engaged and not falling into “inactive voter” rolls. They expect minor rule adjustment will be needed with passage of this bill. The -3 amendment passed and the bill itself will be heard in an April 6 work session, held to consider fiscal impact, not yet filed. Last week Multnomah County Clerk Tim Scott described the -3 amendment refinements as “practical outreach” to those who haven’t voted in some time, to bring them back into active participation as voters. They estimate that this could affect “tens of thousands of Oregon voters, worth the effort.” Clerks use NCOA, the USPS National Change of Address list, for example removing students who’ve moved away. They check “lots of publicly available data” daily, obituaries and public records for people who have died.

ORESTAR? We are currently trying to facilitate communication between Legislative Counsel and Elections staff on details of the elections software Legislative Concept, the precursor to a bill, filed by Rep. Wilde. We are trying to improve the likelihood of getting public access to candidate filing information. That could be coordinated by the state elections software, whether that is ORESTAR, the Oregon Central Voter Registration (OCVR) system, or a replacement version of either of them. We want public access, preferably in a single public portal, for campaign contact information for all candidates filing in Oregon. Details are in last week’s report.

[SB 785](#): This bill would move the Oregon presidential primary date, basically to put Oregon’s votes on a more competitive footing with other

states, since the Oregon primary lags late in the season compared to many other states. We are researching and will submit comments.

We will be watching for developments from three elections placeholder bills, [SB 256](#), on elections laws, [SB 257](#), on Voters' Pamphlets, and [SB 258](#), on Voter Access.

Rights of Incarcerated People (Marge Easley)

[SB 571](#), which restores voting rights to adults in custody, previously scheduled for a work session on March 24 in Senate Judiciary, was carried over to the April 5 agenda. A -3 amendment was proposed that authorizes the Secretary of State to establish by rule a process for identifying the last voluntary residence prior to confinement for purposes of voter registration.

[SJM 2](#) and [SJR 10](#), which urge removal of the criminal punishment exception in US and Oregon constitutions regarding abolishment of slavery, passed out of Senate Judiciary with a do pass recommendation on March 31 and are awaiting transfer to the Senate President's desk.

Election Issues (Marge Easley)

The League will submit testimony in opposition to [SB 827](#), which will be heard in Senate Rules on April 6. This bill establishes a process for an impartial analysis in odd-numbered years of each prospective initiative by the Legislative Policy and Research Director, the Legislative Fiscal Officer, the Legislative Revenue Officer, and Legislative Counsel.

Legislative leaders would then use the analyses to decide whether or not to hold public hearings on the prospective initiatives. It is the League's position that this legislative review process as stated would be costly, cumbersome, and an overreach of legislative authority, given that the initiative process is a form of direct democracy. We would much prefer

that the Legislature provide funding for the [Citizens' Initiative Review Commission \(CIRC\)](#), which was established by the Legislature in 2011.

Electoral Systems (Barbara Klein)

The House Special Committee on Modernizing the People's Legislature (Chair Rep Meek) is holding an [informational meeting on April 7](#) (5:30 pm) to learn more about Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). There is no bill, so no written testimony can be submitted online. Testimony is by invitation only; the League has been invited to attend and testify.

[SB 343](#) (Golden). We continue to await a requested amendment to this local options bill (with other requirements) supporting (RCV). Previous League testimony [here](#).

Six other electoral systems bills have not been scheduled further: RCV bills: [SB 791](#) (Dembrow, Golden, Rep Rayfield), previous testimony [here](#); [HB 2678](#) (Rayfield); [HB 2685](#) (Rayfield); [HB 2686](#) (Rayfield). STAR voting bill [HB 3250](#) (Hudson) and alternative elections task force bill [HB 3241](#) (Hudson) were referred to House Rules, with subsequent referral to Joint Committee of Ways and Means.

Other Governance Issues (Chris Cobey)

Moving forward this week were:

- [HB 2478](#) expanding public records disclosure exemption to include lawyer-client privileged documents (public hearing April 1), and
- a package ([SB 60](#), [SB 61](#), [SB 62](#), [SB 63](#)) of Oregon Government Ethics Commission bills expanding the OGE's time to act, scope of OGE subject-matter responsibilities, restricting sources of payments for OGE penalties, and extending the length of commissioners' term (work session March 30; voted "do pass" to Senate floor on party-line votes).