

# Governance Updates

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By Norman Turrill, Governance Coordinator

## Redistricting (Norman Turrill)

Last Friday the Oregon Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the legislature could have more time, until Sept. 27, to complete its constitutional duties to redistrict the Oregon Legislative Assembly. If the legislature fails in that responsibility, then legislative redistricting will default to the Secretary of State. We do not know how this would affect congressional redistricting, which will likely be performed by a panel of five judges appointed by the Chief Justice, according to state statute. We reported last week that, in testimony to the [Senate Redistricting Committee March 29](#), the Census Bureau said it will be able to deliver population data in a “legacy” format between mid to late August. (The form of the population data delivered in late October will be in an enhanced format.) Then a representative of the company, which supplies the ESRI mapping software that the legislature will use for redistricting, testified that the legacy format data was just what it was expecting anyway! Therefore, the legislative redistricting committees will be able to begin the process of mapping districts with census population data in late August.

Combined with the court decision, that will give the legislature about a month to complete the drawing of new legislative districts. We should expect a special session of the legislature in late September to adopt its redistricting maps. Governor Brown will then have to sign the redistricting bill(s) to make them law.

The problem for the public is that this schedule will give them very little time to suggest alternatives or adjustments to the redistricting committees. The legislature is required by statute to hold five more public hearings, probably one in each of the current congressional districts, after the maps are drawn.

Last Saturday the two redistricting committees held 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.

## Campaign Finance Reform (Norman Turrill)

After the [House Rules held a simultaneous public hearing](#) on 3/30/21 on both [HB 2680](#) (Rayfield) and [HB 3343](#) (Salinas, Clem), little has publicly happened on campaign finance reform. 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!

Private discussions have been around what to do with small nonprofit C4 organizations, which testified that they want to make campaign contributions without the complexities of forming a small donor committee (SDC) or a separate political action committee (PAC). These organizations want to also be able to pay their employees a living wage. The problem for reformers is that C4 organizations normally do not have to report their donors, so they potentially become conduits for “dark money”.

The League believes that there should be no unlimited or huge flows of money allowed. Other bills on campaign finance also need to be considered so that the whole system is balanced.

## Election Topics (Becky Gladstone)

Rep. Wilde filed the League's [HB 3393](#), for elections and filing information access. The League spoke to these three bills this week: supporting expanding automatic voter registration, the Secretary of State's (SoS) budget, and commenting on Oregon switching to Super Tuesday voting in presidential races. We are watching for movement on numerous others.

[HB 3393](#): Rep. Wilde filed this bill for the League, a revised proposal for our repeated effort to increase candidate filing information transparency. The bill calls for public access to reach all candidates who file for office in Oregon, specifying that incumbent government office information not be used. See the [League SB 5538 testimony](#) for background information and watch for more information in upcoming reports.

[SB 2499](#): The League has supported expanding AVR (Automatic Voter Registration) since before 2015 ([League testimony on file](#)) when #MotorVoter [HB 2177 Enrolled \(2015\)](#) passed. This bill proposes expansion to other agencies, with the Dept of Revenue and Oregon Health Authority being discussed. See our 2021 bill [testimony on file](#) and [video at 57.30](#), heard last week.

[SB 5538](#): We support the SoS budget, presented in successive hearings, see League [testimony](#). We recommend listening to [comments at 56.30 in the video](#), followed by League testimony at 1.07.30. We urge for software updates' funding, including AVR Expansion, candidate filing transparency (our bill above, HB 3393), and election districting funding. We urge for funding the multiple requested executive staff positions, including the one that Sen. Golden mentioned in strong Senate floor support for civics education, [SB 513 A \(League testimony -comments\)](#), before this public hearing.

The League supports Community Engagement and Outreach. The Oregon Department of Education Social Sciences has tasked the League preeminently for teaching Oregon students how to vote. We would welcome renewed coordination for the League's [Oregon Student Mock](#)

[Elections \(OSME\)](#) buttressed by a free Civics Education curriculum. This was founded as a partnership, with large HAVA grant funding, contracting through the Secretary of State, winning numerous national awards for our program. About 20 years ago, we bussed hundreds of students to the Capitol from around Oregon, but OSME is mostly digital now.

[SB 785](#): This bill would move the Oregon presidential primary date to Super Tuesday, basically from an after-the-fact 46th place, to effectively second place, since Oregon ballots would be mailed around the New Hampshire primary time. Please see [League testimony](#) for clear benefits and complex challenges. We recommend further discussion and amendments to the bill, see [video testimony](#) at 1.17.

Three elections placeholder bills are pending, [SB 256](#), on elections laws, [SB 257](#), on Voters' Pamphlets, and [SB 258](#), on Voter Access.

[HB 2681-3](#): After considering fiscal impact, the bill passed in House Rules with one "courtesy no" vote with option to change to support for the House floor vote, not yet scheduled. We support this voter registration bill, [League testimony submitted](#) March 11. See earlier reports for details.

[SB 293](#): LWVOR supports this ([League testimony](#)) and cites our new [study](#) and [position](#). The bill calls for recommendations for the state government to "elevate consideration of privacy, confidentiality, and data security measures". No work session has been scheduled yet.

## Electoral Systems (Barbara Klein)

The House Special Committee on Modernizing the People's Legislature (co-chairs Rep Meek and Rep Wallan) held an informational meeting on April 7 to learn more about Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). There was no bill associated with the meeting, thus written testimony was instead submitted to meeting materials (seen [here](#)). Testimony at the hearing was by invitation only; the League testified and it can be seen [here](#) at the

1:00 hour mark. Numerous experts testified, including the SoS' from Maine and Oregon, a member of San Francisco's Elections Commission, academics and lecturers from several colleges, national organizations including More Equitable Democracy, Oregon AFSCME and many elected Oregon officials.

The fate of the seven electoral bills is currently unclear and no further movement has been seen out of their committees, nor have additional meetings been scheduled. The first 5 support Ranked Choice Voting, and the final two support STAR voting.

[SB 343](#), a local options bill, continues to be without the requested amendment (previous League testimony [here](#)). Other electoral system bills are [HB 2678](#) and identical [SB 791](#) (previous League testimony [here](#)), [HB 2685](#), and [HB 2686](#). [HB 3250](#) is a STAR voting bill, and [HB 3241](#) requires a task force to review alternative elections (including STAR voting).

## Other Governance Issues (Chris Cobey)

[SB 827](#), which requires the Secretary of State to submit to the Legislative Assembly a list of each prospective statewide initiative petition that has been filed for upcoming general election, and requires four legislative reports on every initial petition, with the option for legislative hearings on any petition, was heard in Senate Rules on April 6. We presented both [written](#) and oral testimony on behalf of the League, opposing the bill, and suggesting that the legislature fund the existing [Citizens' Initiative Review Commission \(CIRC\)](#), to achieve the same goals.

## Access (Paula Krane)

Recently I participated in a presentation with former Oregon Secretary of State Phil Keisling on Vote by Mail (VBM). It was a broad presentation about early Vote by Mail over 150 years ago to what happened in the



2020 election. Nationally there were and are some challenges to the process but it is very successful and here to stay. However there is one change and that is the name has been changed to VOTE AT HOME since most people mark their ballots at home and then take them to the many drop boxes around. The number of ballots actually mailed is low. Oregon has led the way on this process for voting.