

# Governance Updates

4/19/2021

By Norman Turrill, Governance Coordinator

## Redistricting (Norman Turrill)

Last week we saw a remarkable change in the redistricting process! (See [here](#) and [here](#).) House legislative leaders announced a deal where Republicans would stop demanding that all bills be read aloud and Democrats agreed to add Republican Leader Drazan to the House Redistricting Committee, making an even number of Republicans and Democrats on the committee. The Senate is expected to follow suit.

However, as the [Sunday Oregonian editorial](#) pointed out, this again shows why we need an independent redistricting commission. Politics can get quite distorted around the redistricting process when politicians draw their own districts, which is a conflict of interest. Furthermore, when Republicans and Democrats equally share the redistricting responsibilities, this increases the chances for a bipartisan gerrymander, as partially happened in 2011 in Oregon. The voters lose with the increased number of safe districts in a bipartisan gerrymander. As it now stands, some 97% of incumbents win re-election.

The legislative committees, or the Secretary of State if she gets the opportunity, could still appoint an independent redistricting advisory commission. This would greatly improve the process and demonstrate that our state leaders are committed to a fair and transparent process. The House and Senate Redistricting committees held a [concurrent informational hearing 4/13](#) to learn what their attorney and Legislative

Counsel had to say about the Oregon Supreme Court's decision allowing the legislature until Sept. 27 to complete its redistricting process.

The two redistricting committees have now completed the last three of their series of ten concurrent hearings ([see flyer](#) and [website](#)) focused on each of Oregon's five congressional districts. There will likely not be another opportunity to publicly testify on "communities of common interest" until sometime in late August before the Sept. 27 deadline set by the Oregon Supreme Court. Thanks to all who urged the committees to consider an independent redistricting commission!

## Campaign Finance Reform (Norman Turrill)

There has been no public progress on any of the three campaign contribution limits bills: [HB 2680](#) (Rayfield) [HB 3343](#) (Salinas, Clem), and [SB 336](#) (Golden). These are complex bills, but so far reformers prefer the features of HB 3343. If we could just collect all the best features into one bill, then we would have significant reform!

The League believes that there should be no unlimited or huge flows of money allowed. Other bills on campaign finance, such as a small donor matching program and limits on "dark money", also need to be considered so that the whole system is balanced.

## Election and Cybersecurity Topics (Becky Gladstone)

The legislative pace should ramp up now with normalized scheduling. The R's traded the slowdown of requiring full bill text reading in chambers for parity in Redistricting committee seating. This enables committee veto power and raises long-term bipartisan gerrymandering concerns. See [Oregon House reaches deal to avoid slowdowns](#). Walkout negotiations were not mentioned. Last week's deadlines don't affect Rules Committee bills ([calendar](#)). Read further for elections and cybersecurity bills.

Elections bills:

[HB 2681](#)-3: House Rules passed this voter roll retention bill with one “courtesy” no. [League testimony submitted](#) March 11 supports this voter registration bill, details in earlier reports.

[HB 3021](#): The League supported this bill’s underlying concept to present voting information in native languages, [League testimony posted March 4, 2021](#). We are pleased to see amendments addressing our concerns, for example, substituting local demographic information sources if biennial updates are retained, since the US Census only updates every ten years.

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

[SB 2499](#): Automatic Voter Registration expansion. The League has supported expanding AVR (Automatic Voter Registration) since before 2015 ([League testimony on file](#)), when #MotorVoter, [HB 2177 Enrolled \(2015\)](#) passed. See our 2021 [testimony](#) and [video, at 57.30](#).

Note: the Secretary of State’s (SoS) Elections Division sent a [Rulemaking Notice](#) last week to amend the electronic processing of Voter Registrations. By the June 3 hearing date, several possible updates may have been passed.

[SB 5538](#): The League supports this SoS budget bill, [testimony on file](#). Listen to [comments at 56.30 in the video](#), League testimony at 1.07.30. See details in earlier reports.

[SB 785](#): This bill would move the Oregon presidential primary date to Super Tuesday. 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 election-placeholder bills are still pending, [SB 256](#) on elections laws, [SB 257](#) on Voters' Pamphlets, and [SB 258](#) on voter access.

### Cybersecurity bills

[SB 293](#): LWVOR supports this study to “elevate consideration of privacy, confidentiality, and data security measures”. [League testimony](#) cites our [Privacy and Cybersecurity study](#) and [position](#).

We could use bill watch help, adding these two this week:

[HB 3047 A](#): Establishes civil cause of action for improper disclosure of personal information. Sponsor, Rep Bynum, mentioned this bill in last week's LWVPDX Police Reform [video](#). We are pleased to report full committee support, scheduled for House floor vote on April 20.

[HB 2411 A](#): We are pleased to see full support for infrastructure coordination between the Dept of Transportation and telecommunications providers, including underground installations.

### Rights for Incarcerated Individuals (Marge Easley)

[SB 571](#), which extends voting rights to adults in custody, passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee and subsequently received a [Fiscal Impact Statement](#) for costs associated with the development of registration and voting processes by the Department of Corrections, the Secretary of State, and County Clerks. The bill is now on the Senate President's desk awaiting disposition.

[SJM 2](#) and [SJR 10](#), which remove clauses exempting criminal punishment from the abolishment of slavery provisions in the US and Oregon Constitutions, passed the Senate on April 15 and are now on the Speaker's desk awaiting committee assignment.

## Electoral Systems (Barbara Klein)

Bills are still alive in the House and Senate Rules committees, but nothing obvious is going on with electoral systems.

## Other Governance Issues (Chris Cobey)

A quartet of Senate bills adjusting the Oregon Government Ethics Commission's (OGEC) scope, deadlines, allowing advisory opinions or advice, and extending maximum commissioner service from one four-year term to two four-year terms ([SB 60](#), [SB 61](#), [SB 62](#), [SB 63](#)) passed the Senate Monday with bipartisan support and are headed to the House.

## Other Governance Issues (Tom Messenger)

[HB 2323](#), on intentional election misinformation, had a work session last week and has amendments #3 & 4 pending. Amendment #4 is a synchronization with other laws and some cleanup. Amendment #3 is getting a deeper review by LC, which may change its wording. The amendment's exact intent is not clear.

[HB 2745](#), for optional additions of race, ethnicity and preferred language to voter registration, had a second public hearing last week; the scope was proposed to be narrowed a bit.

[HB 3291](#): If the -1 amendment is adopted, this will be a "gut and stuff" and will be the fifth bill this session to address the ballot "postmark date" issue; a hearing was held 4/8. This is the best bill so far on this topic, but there is solid reasonable opposition to it.