

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

LAVONNE GRIFFIN-VALADE
SECRETARY OF STATE
CHERYL MYERS
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE



ELECTIONS DIVISION

MOLLY WOON
DIRECTOR
255 CAPITOL STREET NE, SUITE 501
SALEM, OREGON 97310-0722
(503) 986-1518

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Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Wilkins, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information to the committee about Oregon's experience with Upgraded Voter Registration.

I serve as the Elections Director for Oregon Secretary of State LaVonne Griffin-Valade. I am responsible for the administration of Oregon's elections system by working closely with state agencies, 36 counties throughout Oregon, and the division's dedicated staff.

Upgraded Automatic Voter Registration, or what we in Oregon call "Oregon Motor Voter," has modernized voter registration in our state by providing a secure, simple, and convenient way for more Oregonians to become registered voters.

We passed Oregon Motor Voter legislation almost a decade ago, and the law went into effect in 2016, making us the first state in the nation to implement this policy. Since that time, it's been successfully administered by Secretaries of State of both major political parties.

Under the old system, most Oregonians needed to take a separate step to register to vote at the DMV after obtaining or renewing their driver license. Oregon Motor Voter eliminated the need to fill out the voter registration card for those with qualifying interactions at the DMV.

Instead, eligible Oregonians receive a mailing from the Oregon Elections Division explaining their options for registering to vote.

Importantly, only a person with a record of providing documentation to DMV establishing that the person is a U.S. Citizen has their information sent to be registered through the Oregon Motor Voter process.

The results are impressive: Over 95% of eligible but unregistered customers at our DMV successfully registered to vote.¹

What's more, Oregonians have appreciated the simplicity and convenience of the process.

¹ 2018 Oregon Motor Voter Registrations by County. Elections Division, Oregon Secretary of State.

We believe that our investment in Oregon Motor Voter and other innovative policies are key reasons that, in 2022, Oregon ranked #1 in the nation for voter turnout, according to the US Elections Project at the University of Florida.² It's our first #1 ranking.

This means that over 61% of Oregon's eligible citizens voted in the 2022 midterm election. By contrast, in 2014, just before we implemented Oregon Motor Voter, our turnout rate of eligible citizens was just 53%.³ We've come a long way in 10 years.

But we believe that we can do even better. That's why, in our last legislative session, we passed a bill applying our Oregon Motor Voter process to Medicaid. Medicaid's existing citizenship verification process, experience with data sharing, and the fact that it reaches populations that might otherwise be hard to engage makes it an ideal program for automatic voter registration.

Our initial research showed that approximately 85% of the remaining eligible but unregistered Oregonians within the state could be reached through AVR at Medicaid.⁴

We are working with our colleagues in Colorado, New Mexico, and other states that have enacted the same policy to get necessary guidance and approval from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Applying this successful policy to Medicaid is the next logical step toward the goal of expanding access and ensuring clean and up to date voter rolls.

I hope this information helps inform your deliberations regarding legislation pending before the committee.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M F Woon". The letters are cursive and connected.

Molly Woon

Director of Elections

² <https://election.lab.ufl.edu/voter-turnout/2022-general-election-turnout/>

³ <https://election.lab.ufl.edu/2014-general-election-turnout-rates/>

⁴ Office of the Secretary of State. Oregon State Legislature Testimony. Provided on February 10, 2023. <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2023R1/Downloads/PublicTestimonyDocument/47680>