Election Reforms to Increase Access to the Ballot

Call To Action Goal (Oregon)

The call to action is to convince the Oregon state legislature to lift the prohibition that prevents counties from providing postage-paid ballot return envelopes to Oregon voters each election cycle. Through this election reform, access to the ballot would be expanded, as counties could take action to provide pre-paid postage, and the eligible voters in those Oregon counties would no longer need to separately seek postage after receiving their ballots, avoiding the expense and a trip to the post office. With more everyday transactions (paying bills, etc.) being conducted digitally, it is becoming increasingly uncommon for individuals to have postage stamps (42% of new, first-time voters don’t have a postage stamp in their home); and with post office closures, this barrier to the ballot is worsening over time.

We have seen how prior election reforms in Oregon have led to higher voter participation rates, and this would be the next step on the path to full voter participation. With a strong showing of activist support, we can help ensure that the legislature, which reconvenes in February 2018, takes action to expand access to the ballot box, and further extend Oregon’s national leadership on voting rights issues.

Call To Action Plan (Oregon)

To get acquainted with the Let People Vote call to action for Oregon, People Power volunteers/activists will:
- watch the livestream/recording of the October 1, 2017 Let People Vote launch event; and
- review and discuss background materials on voter participation in Oregon, and the remaining gaps in the active electorate.

In the coming months, People Power activists/volunteers will work in partnership with the ACLU of Oregon, the Bus Project, and other partner organizations to achieve our goal of increased voter participation. The ACLU of Oregon and partner organizations will periodically post important events, including supplemental training opportunities, at www.map.peoplepower.org, and you will be invited to attend via email, text message and/or phone call.

In the coming months, People Power activists/volunteers will also be able to work independently with their teams and other teams to:
- meet with elected officials and their staff, gather and deliver petition signatures, speak out at public meetings and town halls, organize protests, make phone calls, and send letters, in order to:
  o urge their state lawmakers to pass a bill to authorize counties to provide postage-paid ballot return envelopes;
  o urge their local officials, in particular mayors, city council members, county board commissioners and the county clerks who run local elections, to release public statements in support of this ballot access reform;
- submit Letters to the Editor (LTEs) to local newspapers, stressing the need to take affirmative action to broaden voter participation; and
- take other actions to promote this agenda and voting rights more broadly, as determined by their People Power teams.
Take action TODAY!

Sign up to attend an upcoming event here. Sign up to host your own event here.

Background

Voting is the cornerstone of our democracy and the fundamental right that underpins all our civil liberties. That’s why it is so important to advance reforms to ensure that all Americans who want to cast a ballot and participate in our democracy are able to do so. States and localities can take various measures to promote access to the ballot box such as expanded early voting, election-day voter registration, vote-by-mail programs, online voter registration, and other programs designed to remove obstacles that may make it difficult to vote or to facilitate expanded voter participation.

Despite voting rollbacks in some states, at least 26 states and DC have moved forward since 2012 with laws and policies to expand access to the ballot box – a promising sign of potential for more progress with People Power activism.

Key Reasons to Support Election Reforms

Democracy: We should make it easier to vote, not harder, so that more Americans can participate in our democracy. These common-sense reforms boost turnout, and make our election results more representative of what the people actually want.

Increased Turnout: By implementing measures that facilitate registration and voting, we can pave the way towards increased turnout. The relationship between key election reforms and increased voter participation has been demonstrated in state after state.

For questions, feel free to contact us at info@peoplepower.org.

www.peoplepower.org