

You don't need a home to vote

BY JEANNE P. ATKINS
OREGON SECRETARY OF STATE

Allowing your voice to be heard during elections is a cornerstone of American democracy, and yet the reality is that not everyone is well represented.

In Oregon, we have been recognized pioneers in making voting as accessible to as many people as possible through efforts like vote-by-mail and the Oregon Motor Voter program. But barriers still exist.

These barriers result in real consequences. National voter turnout has been consistently low in low-income and homeless communities. And while unfortunate, it's also understandable. When you're struggling to keep a roof over your head or food on the table, making sure you're properly registered to vote and get that ballot in may not be your number one priority.

As Oregon's chief elections official, I would like us to do better. Being homeless does not mean you have to be voiceless. And registering to vote in Oregon is relatively simple.

The bottom line is you don't need a traditional home to vote. However, you do need to define your physical location in some way to register as a voter. Let me explain:

First of all, let's establish the basic rules. To vote in the upcoming November 8th election, you must be a U.S. citizen; be at least 18 years old; be a resident of Oregon; and be registered by the Oct. 18 deadline. That is it.

Next step: defining your physical location. This is important because your county needs to know which district races belong on your ballot. So while a P.O. Box or General Delivery address doesn't fit this requirement, you are permitted to use the address of a shelter, park, street corner – or anywhere else you spend a significant amount of your time.

Because Oregon is a completely vote-by-mail state, the final challenge is identifying a mailing address. If you already have a reliable mailing address, you could use that. You are also allowed to use your county elections office as your mailing address and the office will hold the ballot for you to pick up.

If you need assistance or have questions, please reach out to your county elections office. You can also call the Oregon Elections Division at 1-866-673-VOTE (8683). In our democratic system, every person's vote carries the same weight. Where you live, what you do, or who you are doesn't change the fact that every eligible voter gets to have an equal say as the person next to them. Our democracy works best when all voices are heard. Including yours.

Tri-County Elections Offices
Multnomah County Elections
501 SE Hawthorne
Portland, OR 97214
(503) 988-3720

Washington County Elections
155 N First Ave.
Hillsboro, OR 97124
(503) 846-5800

Clackamas County Elections
1710 Red Soils Court, Suite 100
Oregon City, OR 97045
(503) 655-8510

Untitled

By Maddy Brown-Clark

The leaves of Autumn
Sail through the air
And gently touch the frigid
ground
They wait to be raked and
gathered into a pile
To join the mulch
To make the gardens grow
And one leaf make it's way
into my favorite
Book to mark a page
While more leaves of
Autumn blow in the wind.

Dream...

by Daniel Cox

Emerging from a dream, unaware of myself
And my present condition.
State of mind.
Floating in space
I am aware of my sense
Now, I am standing on the edge
Of a great ledge. I don't know
How I came to this, I am baffled
By this event.
But wait it's all coming back
Emerging from a dream
I close my eyes. And when I reopen them,
I am no longer on that
Ledge, but I'm in a room.
Much is going on in this room.
Talk of this, and talk of that.
People just mingling about. The hustle
And bustle of the go getters
Emerging from a dream...

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