

# Automatic voter registration takes hold on West Coast

By JONATHAN J. COOPER and KRISTENA HANSEN  
Associated Press

SALEM — In a typical month, 2,000 people register to vote in Oregon. In the first six days of this year, more than 4,300 joined the voter rolls under a new initiative that automatically signs up voters when they apply for driver's licenses.

Oregon is the first state to adopt the idea that it is the government's responsibility to register voters — a move that could increase the number of registered voters by 13 percent by the November election.

California has approved similar legislation, and automatic registration bills have been introduced in more than a dozen other states. But it remains to be seen whether the idea will take hold beyond two West Coast states dominated by Democrats or whether the newly registered will decide to participate.

"There's no other fundamental right we have as citizens that requires you to register or fill out a form," said Alex Padilla, California's Democratic secretary of state, who advocated for the law. "I don't have to register somewhere to exercise my freedom of speech. I don't have to fill out a form somewhere to exercise my right to not be discriminated against."

Researchers at the Pew Center on the States reported in 2012, before the last presidential election, that 51 million Americans were eligible to vote but unregistered. Pew said last year that the United States has one of the lowest voter-participation rates of the democratic world.

President Barack Obama praised Oregon and California twice last month and urged more states to follow their lead.

"The job of our democracy is to make it easier, not make it harder for our citizens to be able to vote," Obama told Democratic governors in a meeting at the White House on Feb. 19.

The idea has plenty of critics, who worry it will lead to more errors in voter registration databases, and could be especially problematic in the 12 states — including California — that grant driving privileges to people who can't prove they're legally in the



Don Ryan/AP Photo

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown smiles after signing an automatic voter registration bill in Salem. Oregon is the first state to adopt the idea that it is the government's responsibility to register voters — a move that could increase the number of registered voters by 13 percent by the November election.



Rich Pedroncelli/AP Photo

A voter marks his ballot while voting in Elk Grove, Calif. Oregon is the first state to adopt the idea that it is the government's responsibility to register voters — a move that could increase the number of registered voters by 13 percent by the November election. California has approved similar legislation, and automatic registration bills have been introduced in more than a dozen other states.

United States. Officials in Oregon and California said driving records make clear who is a citizen.

"If you take away that need for that voter to communicate with their election official, mistakes will be made ... due to limitation of resources," said Logan Churchwell, a

spokesman for True the Vote, which advocates policies to protect election integrity.

Automatic registration received no Republican votes in Oregon and just one in California. Recent election changes in GOP-dominated states have often gone in the other direction, requiring vot-

ers to take more steps to cast ballots such as showing photo identification or showing proof of citizenship at the time of registration.

Republicans say these efforts are intended to prevent voter fraud and secure public confidence in elections, but Democrats say they're efforts to limit access to the ballot. Sixteen states will have more restrictive voting laws in the 2016 election than they did four years ago, according to the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University.

At least 14 states have automatic registration bills pending, according to the Brennan Center, which advocates for automatic registration.

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, a Republican, vetoed an automatic registration bill approved last year by the Democratic-controlled Legislature, which is trying again this year.

Voter registration laws in the U.S. have only been around for about 150 years, said Paul Gronke, a political science professor at Reed College in Portland who specializes in voter behavior.

"Voter registration was put in place in the U.S. in the 1870s and the 1880s — and the historical record is very clear — first to hold out Catholics, southern European immigrants and to push African Americans off the rolls," he said.

Today, Gronke said, registration still is by far one of the biggest barriers to voting.

Minorities, lower-income and young people are the least likely groups to register because they move around a lot and forget to update their address or miss the deadline, or politics isn't a priority to them while they're preoccupied with making ends meet.

Researchers are eager to see whether people who are automatically registered actually cast ballots. Once registered, potential voters will begin getting mail and telephone calls they've never received before, from campaigns and election administrators alike.

"There's this whole apparatus for (get-out-the-vote) and engagement that does not happen when someone is not on the rolls," said Myrna Perez, director of the Voting Rights

and Elections Project at the Brennan Center.

Oregon began registering people eligible to vote in January, using data from applications for new or renewed driver's licenses. They're mailed a letter offering 21 days to opt out or select a political party.

In the first week, 4,653 new potential voters were identified and sent a letter. The vast majority, 84 percent, did nothing and were automatically added to their county's voter rolls as nonpartisan voters. State officials are scheduled to release updated data later this week.

Because Oregon is one of three states that conduct elections entirely by mail, they'll automatically get a ballot before the next election.

California is still working on the software and regulations for its program, which Padilla, the secretary of state, expects to be in place before the 2018 election.

"We want to give as many people as possible the opportunity to vote," said Jeanne Atkins, Oregon's Democratic secretary of state, "and this is one way of accomplishing that."

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

## TV LISTINGS

Evening listings  
WEDNESDAY

WEDNESDAY EVENING													MARCH 9	
A	L	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30	
2	KATU	(2) KATU News at 6		Jeopardy!	Wheel of Fortune	The Middle	The Goldbergs	Modern Family	Black-ish	Crime "Season Two: Episode Ten" (N)		KATU News at 11	(35) Jimmy Kimmel	
3	KRCW	(3) Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Modern Family	Modern Family	Arrow "A.W.O.L."		Super. "Don't You Forget About Me"		KGW News at 10	(35) Access H.	Met Your Mother	Met Your Mother	
4	KOMO	(4) KOMO 4 News		Wheel of Fortune	Jeopardy!	The Middle	The Goldbergs	Modern Family	Black-ish	Crime "Season Two: Episode Ten" (N)		KOMO 4 News	(35) Jimmy Kimmel	
5	KING	(5) NBC Nightly News	KING 5 News	KING 5 News	Evening	The Voice "The Best of the Blind Auditions" (N)				Carmichael (SP) (N)	Carmichael Show	KING 5 News @ 11	(35) Tonight Show	
6	KOIN	(6) KOIN 6 News at 6	CBS Evening News	Extra	Ent. Tonight	Survivor: Kaoh Rong (N)	The Victoria's Secret Swim Special (N)			CSI: Cyber "Flash Squad" (N)		KOIN 6 News @ 11	(35) S.Colbert	
7	KIRO	(7) KIRO 7 News	CBS Evening News	The Insider	Ent. Tonight	Survivor: Kaoh Rong (N)	The Victoria's Secret Swim Special (N)			CSI: Cyber "Flash Squad" (N)		KIRO News	(35) S.Colbert	
8	KGW	(8) KGW News at 6:00 p.m.		Live at Seven	Inside Edition	The Voice "The Best of the Blind Auditions" (N)				Carmichael (SP) (N)	Carmichael Show	KGW News at 11	(35) Tonight Show	
9	KOPB	(9) Journeys in Japan	Business (N)	PBS NewsHour		Particle Fever	The launch of the Large Hadron Collider.					Eric Clapton: Slowhand at 70 - Live at the Royal Albert Hall		
12	KPTV	(12) 6 O'Clock News		Family Feud	Family Feud	Rosewood (N)		Hell's Kitchen "10 Chefs Again" (N)		10 O'Clock News		11 O'Clock News	Loves Ray	
13	KPDx	(13) Mike & Molly	Mike & Molly	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	FOX 12's 8 O'Clock News on PDX-TV		FOX 12's 9 O'Clock News on PDX-TV		The Closer "Live Wire"		The Closer "Dial 'M' for Provenza"		
14	KCPQ	(14) Name Game	Modern Family	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Rosewood (N)		Hell's Kitchen "10 Chefs Again" (N)		Q13 News at 10		Q13 News	Modern Family	
20	TBS	(20) Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Conan (N)		
22	KZJQ	(22) Two and a Half Men	Two and a Half Men	The Simpsons	The Simpsons	Modern Family	Modern Family	Q13 News at 9		Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Friends	Friends	
29	ESPN	(29) NBA Basketball	NBA Basketball	Los Angeles Clippers at Oklahoma City Thunder	Site: Chesapeake Energy Arena (L)			SportsCenter		SportsCenter		SportsCenter		
30	ESPN2	(30) NCAA Basketball	ACC Tournament Site: Verizon Center -- Washington, D.C. (L)			SportsCenter		NBA Tonight	SEC Storied	Jalen & Jacoby (N)	30 for 30 "I Hate Christian Laettner"			
31	NICK	(31) The Thundermans	The Thundermans	Paradise Run	Henry Danger	Henry Danger	SpongeBob	Full House	Full House	Full House	Full House	Friends	Friends	
32	DISN	(32) Liv and Maddie	Austin & Ally	Jessie	Girl Meets World	Invisible Sister (2015, Action) Paris Berelc, Rowan Blanchard.	Bunk'd	Friends Whenever	Liv and Maddie	Liv and Maddie	Bunk'd	Girl Meets World	Girl Meets World	
34	FAM	(34) Mean Girls	(04, Comedy/Drama) Rachel McAdams, Tina Fey, Lindsay Lohan.		YoungHungry (N)	Baby Daddy (N)	★ John Tucker Must Die ('06, Comedy)	Ashanti, Jenny McCarthy, Jesse Metcalfe.				The 700 Club		
35	FMC	(35) Push (2009, Thriller) Chris Evans.	(15) Rush (2013, Action) Chris Hemsworth, Olivia Wilde, Daniel Brühl.				(35) FXM Presents	Rush (2013, Action) Chris Hemsworth, Olivia Wilde, Daniel Brühl.						
36	LIFE	(36) Little Women: Atlanta "Bad Apples"	LW Atlanta "Mo Monie, Mo Problems"	Lit. Women "Special Pizza Delivery" (N)	Women "Hostile Housewarming" (N)			LW Atlanta "Savannah Showdown" (N)	Women "Mo Monie, Mo Problems" (N)					
38	ROOT	(38) Ken Griffey Jr. 1/2	Mariners Access	MLB Baseball Spring Training Kansas City Royals vs. Seattle Mariners Site: Peoria Stadium -- Peoria, Ariz.				In Depth (N)	The Game 365	DFL Soccer Darmstadt vs Mainz				
39	F51	(39) Fox College Hoops	NCAA Basketball Big East Tournament (L)			Fox College Hoops	Fox Sports Live	TMZ Sports (N)		Fox Sports Live	Fox Sports Live	Fox Sports Live	Fox Sports Live	
43	SPIKE	(43) National Treasure (2004, Adventure) Diane Kruger, Justin Bartha, Nicolas Cage.				★ National Treasure: Book of Secrets (2007, Adventure) Jon Voight, Ed Harris, Nicolas Cage.								
44	COM	(44) Futurama	(55) SouthPk "Cartman Joins NAMBLA" (25) South Park	(55) South Park	(25) South Park			South Park	South Park	Broad City (N)	South Park	The Daily Show (N)	Nightly Show (N)	
45	HIST	(45) American Pickers "Picking It Forward"	American Pickers "The Einstein Gamble"	American Pickers "Coin-Op Kings"				American Pickers "On the Road Again"		(05) Pawn Stars	(35) Join or Die	(05) Pawn Stars	Pawn Stars	
46	A&E	(46) The First 48 "The Chase/One Shot"	Duck Dynasty	Duck Dynasty	Duck Dynasty "RV There Yet?"	Wahlburgers "Directing Drama" (SP) (N)		Jep and Jessica (N)	Jep and Jessica (N)	Duck Dynasty	Duck Dynasty	Duck Dynasty	Duck Dynasty	
47	TLC	(47) Fat Chance "Vanessa"	My 600-lb Life "Charity's Story"	600-lb Life "June's Story" (N)		My 600-lb Life "Milla's Story" (N)		Fat Chance "Cheyanne" (N)		My 600-lb Life "Milla's Story"				
48	DUAL	(48) Dual Survival "On Thin Ice"	Dual Survival "High and Dry"	Dual Survival "Cuban Crisis" (N)		Dual Survival (N)		Venom Hunters "Man Down" (N)		Dual Survival				
49	NGEO	(49) Big Fish, Texas "Clash of the Guindons"	Big Fish, Texas "Frankendozzer"	Big Fish, Texas "Clash of the Guindons"		Big Fish "All Fish and No Play" (N)		Big Fix "Gravel to the Finish Line" (N)		Big Fish, Texas "All Fish and No Play"				
50	TNT	(50) Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows	★★★ The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug (2013, Adventure) Richard Armitage, Ian McKellan, Martin Freeman.					★★★ Live Free or Die Hard ('07) Justin Long, Bruce Willis.						
51	AMC	(51) Law & Order: SVU "Born Psychopath" 2/2	Law & Order: S.V.U. "Girl Dishonored"	Law & Order: S.V.U. "Traumatic Wound"	Law & Order: S.V.U. "Poisoned Motive"	Diners, Drive-Ins	Guy & Hunter Vac	Diners, Drive-Ins	Guy & Hunter Vac	Diners, Drive-Ins	Diners, Drive-Ins	Diners, Drive-Ins	Diners, Drive-Ins	
52	USA	(52) Law & Order: SVU "Born Psychopath" 2/2	Law & Order: S.V.U. "Girl Dishonored"	Law & Order: S.V.U. "Traumatic Wound"	Law & Order: S.V.U. "Poisoned Motive"	Restaurant "Ambush: Son Sneak Attack"	Restaurant "Ambush: Faded Star" (N)	House Hunters (N)	House Hunters (N)	Property Brothers				
53	FOOD	(53) Diners, Drive-Ins	Diners, Drive-Ins	Restaurant: Impossible "Game Over"		Property Brothers		House Hunters (N)	House Hunters (N)	Property Brothers				
54	HGTV	(54) Property Brothers				Property Brothers		House Hunters (N)	House Hunters (N)	Property Brothers				
56	FX	(56) The Counselor (13, Drama) Penelope Cruz, Michael Fassbender, Cameron Diaz.		★★★ Star Trek: Into Darkness (2013, Sci-Fi) Zachary Quinto, Zoe Saldana, Chris Pine.		Anderson Cooper 360 "Post Debate Special" Anderson Cooper with live post-debate analysis.				Star Trek: Into Darkness ('13) Chris Pine.				
57	CNN	(57) Democratic Presidential Debate (L)								Democratic Presidential Debate				
58	FNC	(58) The Kelly File with Megyn Kelly	Hannity			The Kelly File with Megyn Kelly		Hannity		On the Record				
61	CNBC	(61) Shark Tank	Filthy Rich Guide	Filthy Rich Guide	Filthy Rich Guide	Filthy Rich Guide	Filthy Rich Guide	Filthy Rich Guide	Filthy Rich Guide	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	
63	BRV	(63) ★★ Rush Hour 3 (2007, Action) Jackie Chan, Roman Polanski, Chris Tucker.		Atlanta "Read School is in Session"		Atlanta "Turning Over a New Peach"		WatchWhat (N)	WatchWhat (N)	WatchWhat (N)	WatchWhat (N)	Housewives Atl.	Housewives Atl.	
64	TAM	(64) ★★★★★ 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea Kirk Douglas.	(45) Operation Undersea	(45) Merbabies		Face Off "Bottled Up" (N)		The Internet (P) (N)	Face Off "Bottled Up"	The Internet				
65	SYFY	(65) ★★ Legion (2010, Action) Lucas Black, Tyrese Gibson, Paul Bettany.		Face Off "Smoke and Mirrors"		Face Off "Bottled Up" (N)		The Internet (P) (N)	Face Off "Bottled Up"	The Internet				
68	RFD	(68) WesternSportWeek	Noble Outfitters	Dennis Reis Univ	Equestrian Nation	RW Horsemanship	Rural Eve. News	Women's Rodeo	The Final Spin	WesternSportWeek	Noble Outfitters	Product Showcase		

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