

# Getting young voters to turnout is elusive goal

## History of low participation

By HILLARY BORRUD  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregon is among the easiest places in the nation to vote, with a vote-by-mail system and an automatic voter registration program.

Still, turnout among the state's youngest voters has lagged behind other age groups for years, just as it does nationally.

That disparity is a popular target this year for state politicians, who have pitched a variety of ideas aimed at getting more young people to vote. However, their proposals are limited to things government can control, from free ballot postage to mandatory mock elections in public schools.

Some observers said young people are also looking for something else that is often missing: Exciting candidates.

Turnout among voters ages 18 to 29 was lower than any other age group in the last two presidential and midterm elections, according to data from The Bus Project, a nonprofit in Portland that encourages young people to participate in politics and elections.

In the 2008 presidential election, turnout for Oregon's voters aged 18 to 29 reached nearly 65 percent. Turnout among these voters dipped to 40 percent during the midterm elections. By contrast, 93 percent of registered voters ages 60 to 69 participated in the 2008 presidential election, according to data from The Bus Project.

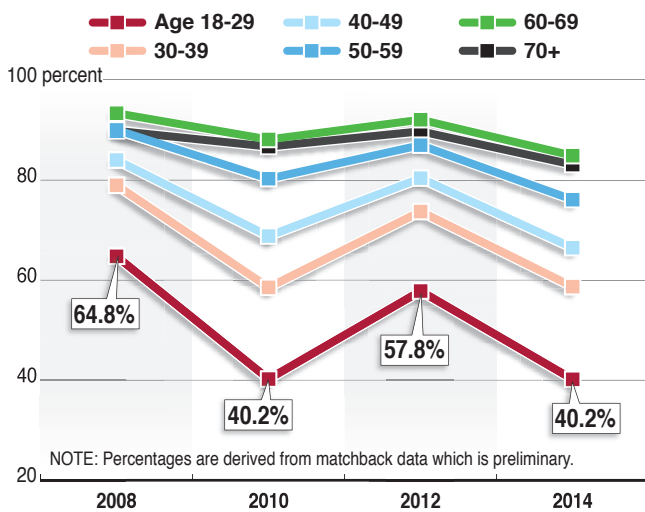
### Experience and values

Nikki Fisher, the group's executive director, said she hears from young people that political candidates do not share their experiences or values, but "this year in particular, I think there are a lot of candidates who are reflective."

Paul Gronke, a political science professor and director of the Early Voting Informa-

## Oregon's young voter turnout

Voter turnout for Oregonians ages 18 to 29 has been lower than among older voters, according to figures from The Bus Project, a nonprofit focused on young voters in Portland. Of approximately 2.2 million registered Oregon voters in 2014, roughly 70 percent voted, although just 40 percent of voters aged 18-29 voted that year.



Source: The Bus Project

EO Media Group graphic

tion Center at Reed College, offered a different perspective. Gronke said Oregon has a highly educated electorate and attracts large crowds to political rallies.

"But then when you look at the political leadership, it's so bland," Gronke said. "Who's the next hot shot in Oregon politics? I don't know." There are few competitive state or congressional races this year, and many of the candidates have been in politics for decades.

State politicians have pitched a variety of ideas to boost young voter turnout in Oregon.

All three Democrats in the May 17 primary for secretary of state — the official in charge of elections — want the government to begin paying for postage for vote-by-mail ballots. The proposal was included earlier this year in a bill sponsored by state Sen. Richard Devlin, D-Tualatin, and Rep. Val Hoyle, D-Eugene, each a candidate for secretary of state.

"When I go to my children and ask them — who are both of voting age — if they have a stamp, they look at me like I

have three heads because they don't use the mail very often," Hoyle said during a hearing on the bill.

According to the legislative staff, the proposal would cost \$1.8 million over the next two-year budget cycle.

### Ballot drop box

The Legislature didn't pass the free postage proposal, but did approve legislation that will require a ballot drop box within 4 miles of every public university and community college campus in the state.

Gronke said he was skeptical of the claim it is inconvenient or unfamiliar for young people to purchase stamps, which are available at grocery stores and other locations.

Democratic candidate Brad Avakian, the state's labor commissioner, wants to revive the state-paid postage proposal. He also wants to require mock elections and a new civics curriculum in public middle and high schools.

According to Avakian's website, "This education will lead to higher voter turnout, greater civic engagement, and stronger communities."



Hillary Borrud/EO Media Group

Willamette University student Nastja Nykaza, 19, said she plans to vote this year but is not sure whether her vote will make a difference.



Hillary Borrud/EO Media Group

Willamette University students Nick Wagener, 21, and Taneesh Sra, 21, said they are excited to vote in the November presidential election.

would make it this far," said Taneesh Sra, 21, who said this will be the second election in which she votes.

Nick Wagener, 21, said he voted in 2012 and is excited to vote again this year, even though "you see both sides getting more radical, which isn't good." Wagener said this prevents politicians from tackling important issues.

Nastja Nykaza, 19, said she plans to vote but does not feel like she can make much of a difference. "I would like to think so, but I'm kind of pessimistic about that type of thing," Nykaza said.

Miles MacClure, 19, agreed and said news coverage gave some candidates an unfair advantage. "The corporate media is an advertising tool for candidates backed by large corporations, like Trump and (Democratic presidential front-runner Hillary Clinton)," MacClure said.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

## Coast Guard warns of consequences for false mayday calls

EO Media Group

WARRENTON — The Coast Guard issued a warning that there are serious legal consequences for making false mayday reports.

Coast Guard Sector Columbia River Command Center personnel received four potentially false mayday calls in a recent two-week period.

"Hoax calls waste valuable time and resources, but most importantly it potentially puts responding personnel in danger and can interfere with legitimate search and rescue cases," said Lt. Cmdr. Erika Barron, command center chief, Sector Columbia River. "With busy spring and summer boating seasons, false distress calls can divert essential resources when they are needed elsewhere to ensure the safety of the public."

Making a hoax call to the Coast Guard is a crime punishable by up to six years in prison; a \$250,000 criminal fine, a \$5,000 civil fine and reimbursement to the Coast Guard for operating costs incurred. The hourly standard rates for Coast Guard assets can be found at Coast Guard Reimbursable Standard Rates. A motor lifeboat, for example, costs \$3,578 an hour. An H-60 helicopter bills \$15,562 an hour.

Boaters are encouraged to contact their local Coast Guard unit and relay any mayday calls they hear.

## Fresh veggies from the food bank

The Daily Astorian

Free fruits and vegetables are again being distributed to qualifying low-income residents in Clatsop County on Thursdays through Sept. 29. This project, done in the style of a roadside vegetable stand, is a direct result of the Food Bank Fresh initiatives launched by the Clatsop Community Action Regional Food Bank.

Times and locations are:

- Astoria: 9 to 10:30 a.m., parking lot between Second and Third streets on the north side of Marine Drive.
- Seaside: 12 to 1:30 p.m., Factory Outlet Center, 1111 N. Roosevelt Drive.
- Warrenton: 3 to 4:30 p.m., CCA Regional Food Bank parking lot, 2010 S.E. Chokeberry Ave.

"These free fruits and vegetables are in addition to the food people receive during their regular visit to a food pantry, and are designed to

complement the fresh whole-food activities in motion at CCA Regional Food Bank partner agencies in Clatsop County," Marlin Martin, food bank director, said.

Much of the fresh produce received at the food bank comes directly from the Oregon Food Bank and the Network of Regional Food Banks. Truckloads of product, typically rejected from the retail markets, are donated or rescued to avoid wasting food that, although not perfect, is still fresh and consumable. The products are shipped directly CCA each week. Fresh produce donations are also received from local industry donors through the Fresh Alliance

program, and from a growing number of gardeners, farmers and backyard apple trees.

In addition, as many as 70,000 packets of garden seeds are being given to low-income residents interested in growing fresh vegetables at their homes. The seeds will be available at the Mobile Produce Pantries and at food pantries throughout Clatsop County.

Fifteen to 20 volunteers are needed. Volunteers may serve as many days as they want to, but those who can commit to at least one morning or one afternoon shift each Thursday are especially sought. For information, or to volunteer, call 503-861-3663.

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*The family of Mike Meno would like to express our sincere thanks to Dr. Aaron Sasaki and staff, OHSU, Columbia Memorial Staff, Clatsop Care Center staff and especially the physical therapy department, including Dr. Michelle Rogers.*

*Also, former patients, co-workers, friends and family who sent cards, donations, prayers and notes of support during a really tough time. We just were so overwhelmed by the many messages of love and support. I shared each one with Mike and he was so surprised and touched by them as well as all the visits.*

*We have enough sweet and funny stories to lift us for a lifetime.*

God Bless you all,  
Vicki and Kallie Meno

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