An election guide by and for rural Oregonians

2024

SMALL TOWN ACTIONS FOR A NEW DEMOCRACY

STAND



En español

Esta guía está disponible en español. Descárguela en nuestra página web en **rop.org** o llámenos para pedir una copia.

BALLOT BASICS

Who represents you? What power do they have?

In Oregon, the people determine who is best fit to represent us at every level of government. We choose who makes decisions on our behalf about schools, healthcare, crisis response, housing, policing, and more.

Curious what the images mean? Check out the key on Page 4 of this guide!

In your City



City Councils decide how tax dollars are raised and spent on things like when the library is open, policing priorities and budget, as well as the cost of your water and sewer bills.

In your County



County Commissions decide how our tax dollars are raised and spent on county services and infrastructure such as public health and mental healthcare.



County Clerks mail and receive ballots and count votes.

State Government in Salem



The **legislature** decides how many **state** tax dollars go to schools, childcare, forest fire relief, paid medical leave, and more.



Secretary of State protects free and fair elections statewide.

U.S. Congress in Washington DC



The **Senate** and the **House of Representatives** decide how many **federal** tax dollars go to food assistance, Medicaid, Medicare, war, and more.

What about Housing?

Decisions about affordable housing and response to homelessness are made at **every level of government**.



Check out Page 3 of this guide for questions to ask candidates about these issues!

Why Vote?

Rural Oregonians value our freedom. The freedom of a safe and affordable place to call home. Freedom to retire in dignity. Freedom to decide who governs in our name. By voting, we demonstrate that our beliefs, priorities, values, and morals are the ones to listen to and to safeguard.

Who Can Vote?

In Oregon, anyone can register to vote who:

- ✓ Is a resident of Oregon
- ✓ Is a US citizen
- ✓ Will be 18 years old by election day **(November 5th, 2024)**

Not sure if you're registered to vote?

Check or update your registration by scanning the code, calling 1-866-673-8683, or visiting **oregonvotes.gov/myvote**.

If you are living somewhere temporarily or do not have a permanent address, you can vote by mail! To register, you can use any location in the county as your physical address, such as a park, shelter, or intersection. If you cannot receive mail where you are registered, pick up your ballot at the county elections office.

In Oregon, people with a criminal history can vote except for those currently in prison for a felony. You can vote after returning from jail or prison, even if you are on probation or parole. However, you will need to re-register.

You have a right to a large print ballot, a braille ballot, and someone to support you in filling out your ballot regardless of disability. Call your local elections office to learn more.

Can't Vote Yet?

If you are not a US citizen or are younger than 18 years old, you can participate in the election by talking to your neighbors, family, and friends to encourage them to register and vote. For those of us who can vote, we're voting for ourselves, but we're also voting for those who can't, whether because of age, immigration status, or something else.

Vote by Mail!

Ballots will be mailed to registered voters on October 16th

Ballot Return Option 1

Drop your signed ballot at an official drop box. You can drop it off at any official drop box until 8 pm on Election Day, Tuesday, November 5th. Look up your nearest drop box: **sos.oregon.gov/voting/Pages/drop-box-locator.aspx**

Ballot Return Option 2

Mail your signed ballot, no stamp required. For your vote to count, your ballot needs to be signed and postmarked by Election Day, November 5th. Drop your ballot in an official US Postal Service mailbox by November 4th, or on November 5th you can take your signed ballot into a Post Office and ask a postal worker to postmark it for you.



OREGON BALLOT MEASURES

Do these measures advance democracy?



	What does this measure do?	Does this measure advance democracy?
115 ✓ **Yes**	**Measure 115** would amend the Oregon Constitution to allow impeachment of state officials. The House of Representatives, with a ⅔ vote, could send a resolution of impeachment to the Senate for illegal or corrupt conduct, willful neglect of their constitutional duty, or another felony or high crime. The Senate could then try the case, and convict with a minimum of a ⅔ vote.	**Yes.** In a democracy, no one is above the law. Every other state legislature in the US has an impeachment process. Historically, elected officials accused of wrongdoing have resigned due to backdoor pressure and public outcry. An impeachment process would increase transparency, allowing all Oregonians to be well-informed.
116 ✓ **Yes**	**Measure 116** would amend the Oregon Constitution to create a nonpartisan commission to decide fair salaries and benefits for statewide elected officials, State Representatives, Senators, District Attorneys, and judges. Oregon's Governor earns less than 46 other states' governors. The new commission could bring Oregon's salaries in line with other states.	**Yes.** State legislators earn a salary of only $35,000 a year while they work long hours in the legislature, listen to those they represent, and make informed decisions on our behalf. Setting salaries that reflect the job responsibilities would help attract and keep highly qualified people in those offices, including people raising families or paying off student debt.
117 ✓ **Yes**	**Measure 117** would create a system of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in statewide elections. It would give voters the option to rank candidates in order of preference for specified federal and most statewide offices. Votes would be tallied in rounds, so the candidate with the fewest votes in each round is defeated and the votes for that candidate go to a voter's next-highest ranked candidate until one candidate has a majority of votes.	**Yes.** Measure 117 would allow candidates to run without fear of splitting voter support, opening a pathway for more candidates for voters to choose from. It is already used in Benton County and Corvallis city elections. Across the country, RCV has increased the number of women candidates and candidates of color. It also has increased participation among young voters and reduced smear campaigns amongst candidates.

Did you know? **Oregon's three billionaires together own twice as much wealth as half of Oregonians combined.** — Oregon Center for Public Policy

118 ◯ **You Decide**	**Measure 118** would increase taxes on the largest companies and redistribute those dollars evenly among everyone living in Oregon. It would increase the corporate minimum tax to 3% on sales above $25 million and use the proceeds to send equal rebates to everyone who lives in Oregon for 200 or more days that year, regardless of age, documentation status, or income. Anyone who loses state public benefits as a result of this rebate would receive support equal to the lost benefit amount.	**You Decide.** Taxing large corporations more fairly and distributing the income to Oregonians in need is crucial for a reasonable standard of living. That said, to end poverty, Oregon must prioritize aid to those who need it most. The legislature and governor use Oregon's General Fund to fund essential programs like schools, transportation, and healthcare. This measure could divert money from the General Fund to give it to individuals, costing some Oregonians more than it helps. If passed, the legislature must avoid these pitfalls.
119 ✓ **Yes**	**Measure 119** would require all companies that process or sell cannabis in Oregon to sign a labor peace agreement in order to receive a business license. This would require the company to remain neutral when labor unions communicate with employees about workers' rights.	**Yes.** Cannabis companies that treat their workers fairly are undercut by those exploiting the labor of many Oregonians. As other states have already done, Measure 119 would level that playing field and give workers a fair chance to make informed decisions about union representation and worker safety. Well-informed workers lead to higher quality control and safer products for consumers.

ROP does not advocate for or against any candidate for office. We prepare this election guide to encourage participation by rural Oregonians regardless of party affiliation. We advocate for ballot measures that will strengthen our communities and remind voters to hold dear the pursuit of democracy and fairness when we fill out our ballots or organize in our communities.

DE•MOC•RA•CY (noun)

For democracy to work, it must uphold basic principles. Here are the four pillars of democracy according to the World Book Encyclopedia:

1. **Inclusion of all and equality for all**
2. **Majority rule and minority rights**
3. **Well-educated and well-informed people who participate in the democratic process**
4. **A reasonable standard of living**

Why is our tax structure so unfair?

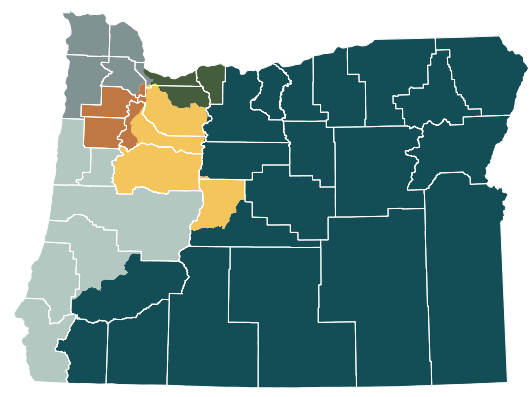
Over the last few decades, changing laws have increased taxes for low-income people but decreased taxes for millionaires and large corporations:

- Large corporations don't pay a higher rate of taxes as their profits increase above $1 million
- Cities and counties cannot raise tax rates for wealthy homeowners
- The state legislature needs a ⅗ majority to increase tax rates or create a new tax

Measure 118 attempts to rebalance things, but current law means it could hurt other state-funded programs. It shouldn't be this hard to fund everything we need! Let's work together to tip the scales back toward equality.

Find your Congressional District

Since 2022, Oregon has been divided into 6 districts and elects 6 US Representatives in all. Visit **ziplook.house.gov** or scan the code to find out who represents you.



A Democracy by, for, and of the people

We all know what our communities need to survive and thrive: good schools and libraries, a wage we can live on, and access to healthcare and retirement. To improve our country, some say we need to restrict freedoms, cut essential programs, and limit workers' rights. We disagree.

Some say we should*...	What we really need...
Employment and workers' rights	
▶ Cut overtime protections for 4.3 million workers ▶ Cut American Rescue Plan (ARP) programs that have created or saved 220,000 jobs	▶ A universal basic income for everyone ▶ A living wage for all workers ▶ A guarantee of healthcare for all
Education and childcare	
▶ Eliminate the Head Start early education program, which serves over 1 million children annually (10 thousand in Oregon) ▶ Divert taxpayer dollars to subsidize private education ▶ Deny loan access to all students at schools that provide in-state tuition to undocumented immigrants in 25 states, including Oregon	▶ Invest in schools and educators ▶ Increase mental health therapists and extracurriculars for youth ▶ Provide books and curriculum that reflect the many experiences of students ▶ Ensure childcare is accessible and affordable in every county in the state
Food	
▶ Limit access to food assistance, impacting up to 40 million people ▶ Eliminate the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), resulting in children who currently get free school meals having to pay	▶ Partner with farmers, classrooms, and restaurants to increase local food access and add local jobs ▶ Eliminate food insecurity and child hunger in Oregon
Healthcare and bodily autonomy	
▶ Undo Medicare's ability to negotiate lower prescription prices for seniors ▶ Default to enrolling Americans in Medicare Advantage and other private programs instead of Medicare ▶ Allow state governments to monitor people's periods and pregnancies to possibly prosecute them if they miscarry ▶ Restrict or ban access to abortion, fertility services, and contraception nationally	Turn Oregon's right to healthcare into a reality: ▶ Easy, affordable access to the medication and healthcare we need, when we need it ▶ Everyone is treated with respect and dignity throughout the healthcare process ▶ Access to full reproductive healthcare

*Put forward in Project 2025 by the Heritage Foundation (more information at democracyforward.org/the-peoples-guide-to-project-2025)

Where do we go from here?

In this election, we are choosing between starkly different futures. We can vote for people who will expand rights, promote democracy, and work to improve people's lives, or we can vote for people who want to limit our rights, take away democratic freedoms, and make life harder for families and communities. Let's use our voices and our votes this election to resist growing divisions and to protect and build a stronger democracy where every voice counts.

Here in Oregon, we have come together time and time again to pass laws that expand freedom and promote thriving communities and healthy families, including:

- Expanding unemployment benefits through the Oregon Worker Relief Fund
- Making paid family medical leave available to all Oregonians
- Increasing funding to schools by $2 billion every 2 years through the Student Success Act
- Ensuring local law enforcement dollars don't go toward enforcing federal immigration policy

OUR VOTES, OUR VALUES

Interviewing Candidates for Office

Our vision in 2024 is to turn out in record numbers to vote for candidates and policies that protect and expand our freedoms.

Remember: Elections aren't about deciding who we let take the wheel. They're about choosing who we're going to work alongside for the next few years to build a thriving rural Oregon. We won't rest until we have worked with whoever is elected to win basic freedoms for all.

Find out candidates' core values and positions on the issues we care about:

- Call them up and ask directly;
- Attend a candidate forum and ask questions;
- Post questions on social media and share the candidates' responses.

Here are some example questions to ask candidates

City officials

How will you work to resolve the housing crisis that is pushing many families onto the streets and out of town?

County officials

How will you make sure that people hit hardest by skyrocketing rent and rising living expenses have the freedom of a reasonable standard of living and a safe and affordable place to call home?

State legislators

What will you do to prioritize building strong community infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, and emergency evacuation systems across rural and small-town Oregon?

Secretary of State and County Clerks

Will you defend our democracy by making sure that our elections remain free and fair and that every Oregon voter has the ability to vote easily?

Attorney General

Two out of three Oregon sheriffs have immigration policies out of line with Oregon state law. Will you prioritize getting local law enforcement to follow state law and protect local resources instead of using them to support the multibillion-dollar federal agency Immigration and Customs Enforcement?

PO Box 664
Cottage Grove, OR 97424

Who is Rural Organizing Project?

The Rural Organizing Project (ROP) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization made up of more than 75 human dignity groups and thousands of community leaders working to advance democracy and human dignity across rural Oregon. Learn more and sign up for our email newsletter at **rop.org**

Keep in touch!

Your ROP organizer can connect you with others in your county working on the issues you care about, help you figure out where to begin taking action, or support you in ongoing work! Give us a call, shoot us an email, and follow us on social media:

- **@ruralorganizingproject**
- **Rural Organizing Project**
- **office@rop.org**
- **503-543-8417**

Find the images you care about most throughout this guide and see which elected positions make key decisions about each of them!

- Healthcare
- Libraries
- Roads and Bridges
- Water and Sewer
- Forest Fire Response
- Law Enforcement
- Right to Vote
- War
- Food
- Housing
- Paid Leave
- Social Security
- Childcare
- Healthy Environment
- Mental Health
- Schools

Hey neighbor! What's on your mind?

What issues do you most want politicians to address?

Rural Oregon deserves a seat at the table wherever decisions are being made about us. That's why this guide connects the dots directly between the issues we care about and the local elected officials we're voting for on **November 5th** who have power to help us make our communities work for all of us.

