

SHEMIA FAGAN

SECRETARY OF STATE

CHERYL MYERS

DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE

TRIBAL LIAISON



For Immediate Release

January 26, 2022

Contact: Ben Morris, 703-338-9650, [ben.morris@sos.oregon.gov](mailto:ben.morris@sos.oregon.gov)

## Secretary of State Shemia Fagan Announces the Protect Our Democracy Agenda

*The 2022 Legislative Session comes amid a sustained attack on our most basic political right — the right to vote. The Protect Our Democracy Agenda includes measures to protect the administration of Oregon's elections.*

Salem, OR — Secretary of State Shemia Fagan sent a letter today to members of the Oregon State Legislature to ask their support for the Protect Our Democracy Agenda.

“Oregon is often called on to lead,” Secretary of State Shemia Fagan wrote in the letter. “We were the first state in the nation to implement vote-by-mail in the 1990s. In 2016 we became the first state to implement automatic voter registration. Today our elections are the gold standard in safety, security and participation. As the nation faces an unprecedented attack on voting rights, we are called to lead once again.”

The Protect Our Democracy Agenda of 2022 includes 4 priorities:

- **Protect the people who protect our democracy (LC 286).** Since the 2020 election we’ve seen an unprecedented rise in threats against local elections officials around the country and right here in Oregon. Part of defending our democracy is protecting the dedicated professionals who administer elections in all 36 counties in Oregon. We need to establish penalties for the harassment of elections workers and exempt their private information, such as home address, from public records.
- **Modernize Oregon’s voter registration and election management system.** Modernizing our decades old voter registration database system will help protect the integrity of our elections. The Secretary of State’s Elections Division is seeking \$5,300,000 Federal Funds in a technical limitation increase as part of the Oregon Votes project. Oregon Votes is a new, modern system for voter registration and election management, that will increase communication with voters, increase efficiency and uniformity across the state, and improve adherence to leading federal standards.
- **Begin to right-size our elections administration.** During the busiest elections season in history the Oregon Elections Division has operated without adequate staff, relying on overtime and other measures to meet the needs of the public. We are seeking an increase from the general fund to hire four key positions within the Division to begin to right-size our staff.

- **Apply necessary technical fixes for clarity in elections laws (SB 1527).** The Elections Division has identified needed technical fixes to several laws. These include changes to the timelines for notifying candidates of a recall or complaint, updating antiquated recall signature timelines, and updates to deadlines that were impacted by HB 3291, the Postmark Bill.

Separately, Secretary Fagan endorsed HB 4133, which will remove barriers to online voter registration for people without a driver's license and HB 4147, which will restore voting rights to Oregonians — disproportionately Black and other people of color — disenfranchised because of incarceration.

“This agenda will ensure that Oregon continues to lead on voting rights and that we play our part in the fight against anti-democratic attacks on our nation's elections,” Secretary Fagan said in her letter.

Download a copy of the letter sent to state legislators on January 26, 2022.