



TO: Clerk Sleeper, Michigan House of Representatives

FROM: Barbara Smith Warner on behalf of National Vote at Home Institute

DATE: June 7, 2023

RE: Testimony in support of HB 4697

The National Vote at Home Institute is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that works to increase voters' access to, use of, and confidence in voting at home. In addition to my official role as Executive Director, I am testifying today both as a resident of Oregon, where we created the first vote at home system and have used it successfully for over twenty years, and as a former legislator who served in the Oregon House (2014-2022).

Secure drop boxes are a well-established method for the return of completed mailed-out ballots. They have been used throughout the country for decades and have proven to be both secure and popular with voters. In Oregon, where we've conducted all our elections with mailed-out ballots for over 20 years, a full two-thirds of all ballots cast in the 2020 election were returned through secure drop boxes. Clearly, this option is popular with voters who either are not confident in the USPS, or simply want to comfort of "voting in person" where their act of putting the ballot in the secure drop box is an official step of transferring it to the elections department.

And in the 20-plus years of all mailed-out ballot elections, the conservative Heritage Foundation, which tracks election fraud nationwide, reports only 19 fraud cases in Oregon, which works out to fewer than 1 per year, compared to about 50 million ballots cast over that time, or fewer than one per 2.5 million votes cast. Those numbers make it clear this is a very secure approach to election administration.

Oregon drop boxes are mostly outside with 24 x 7 availability and often with drive-up access, with some indoors in places such as public libraries. Oregon started with 70 drop boxes, and is up to over 300 today - about one for every 10,000 registered voters. And many states, including Oregon, have not seen the need to legislate specific surveillance of those boxes, any more than they would the ubiquitous blue USPS mailboxes.

VOTE **HOME**

Putting voters first by allowing broad-based access to secure drop boxes, located in such a way to ensure equal availability and access by all voting cohorts, is the right thing to do. Please support HB 4697.