

THE STRONG FAMILIES VOTER GUIDE

Vote for Strong Families on November 4 — make your voice heard!

“Our families count and all of our lives matter!” Voting is one way we can join with our neighbors, family, and friends to directly affect the ways our communities look, feel, and act. Voting is just one way we can take action. There are many ways we can all get involved in the process, regardless of our citizenship status or whether we can vote.

Elections matter because elected leaders can make decisions that either help or hurt our families. Politicians pay more attention to communities who participate in elections. Voting is a public way of saying, **“We are here and we count!”**

By family, we mean all the different ways our families look in Oregon. We equally recognize and support families of all shapes, sizes, and ages; biological and chosen; living in one household, many households,

and across national borders; from low-income to middle class or beyond; documented, undocumented, or mixed-status; with children and without. **Oregon families come in every shade of the rainbow — and all deserve the rights, recognition, and resources to thrive.**



SIGN UP AT
[STRONGFAMILIES.TURBOVOTE.ORG](https://strongfamilies.turbovote.org)
to register to vote or receive reminders
about upcoming elections.

Ballot Measures: Helping or hurting families?

Oregon has had the initiative and referenda process for more than 100 years. And each election cycle, ballot measures are approved or rejected that can have a significant impact on our families and communities. Did you know that Oregonians used the initiative and referenda process to usher in the following landmark reforms?

- Women got the right to vote (1912)
- Vote by mail became available (1998)

Ballot measures have passed that hurt our families — including restrictions on state spending that have resulted in disastrous cuts to public schools and public safety and treating children like adults and sending them to state prisons. Sometimes ballot measures are used to target different members of our community, like the many initiatives that would have

harmed lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals and families by treating them as second-class citizens.

Because ballot measures are often confusingly worded, it can be hard to tell what you are voting for or against. In fact, many people don't vote on ballot measures at all because they don't feel they have enough information about the measure. But your vote matters! In 2008, we faced Measure 58, which would have limited our children's access to English as a second language (ESL) programs and potentially banned bilingual education in Oregon schools. While almost 95,000 votes were cast for the US president most people did not vote on Measure 58. That same year, a different ballot measure passed by fewer than 500 votes of more than 1,000,000 cast. When elections are close, every vote counts, and we need to make sure that our voices are heard on decisions that impact our communities.

2014 Ballot Measure Recommendations

To make recommendations for November 2014 ballot measures, we evaluated all the measures on the Oregon ballot using simple criteria. If the ballot measure passes, will it:

- Recognize and support families of all kinds to have the same health, education, and other important life outcomes?
- Protect individuals and families from discrimination, racial profiling, and harassment?

A Changing Oregon

Oregon is growing more diverse, and these families are an important part of our communities, increasingly participating in elections and making their voices heard.

- From 2000 to 2012, the Asian population of our state grew by 40%, while the Pacific Islander population grew by close to 70%.
- 1 in 3 Latinos in Oregon are eligible to vote, and close to 40% of those voters are young people between 18 to 29 years old.
- 33% of all kids in Oregon live in a single-parent household.

MEASURE

WHAT IT DOES

DOES IT SUPPORT STRONG FAMILIES?

WE URGE YOU TO...

#86 Oregon Opportunity Initiative

Amends the Oregon Constitution to create a fund for Oregonians pursuing post-secondary education.

In the past decade, tuition and fees in the Oregon University system rose 50%, while state assistance to students has fallen 35%. Increasing student aid gives all Oregonians a fair chance at a college education.

VOTE YES

#87 Amendment to promote public service

Amends the Oregon Constitution to allow state judges to be employed by the National Guard and state public universities as teachers and to allow school employees to serve in the state legislature.

This measure corrects an old rule by letting state judges serve in the National Guard or state colleges. It will also permit school employees to serve as legislators. Our communities benefit when those who want to serve can do so.

VOTE YES

#88 Alternative Driver's Card Referendum

Affirms that SB 833 will go into effect, authorizing Oregon to issue a driver's card to anyone who can provide proof of living in Oregon for at least a year, can pass the driving test, and can provide proof of insurance coverage.

An estimated 80,000+ people in Oregon may be unable to provide adequate proof of citizenship. This is a common sense solution used in other states to assure that those who are driving will take the test to be a certified driver.

VOTE YES

#89 Equal Rights Amendment

Amends the Oregon Constitution to prohibit state and local government from discriminating on the basis of gender.

This is a public step to challenge gender discrimination such as wage gaps and hiring practices. National data shows that Latinas make 55 cents, African American women 64 cents, and White women 77 cents where a man earns \$1.

VOTE YES

MEASURE**WHAT IT DOES****DOES IT SUPPORT STRONG FAMILIES?****WE URGE YOU TO...****#91 Legalized Marijuana**

Regulates the personal possession, commercial cultivation and sale of marijuana to adults over 21 years of age.

In 2012, there were nearly 13,000 arrests or citations for marijuana in Oregon. Even though both groups use marijuana at the same rate, Black Oregonians are twice as likely to be arrested for marijuana possession as Whites.

VOTE YES**#92 Oregon Mandatory Labeling of GMOs Initiative**

Requires stores that sell and companies that make food to label packages, displays, or shelves with genetically modified ingredient information as is required in many countries outside the United States.

People of color and low-income communities are more likely to be exposed to toxins. For example, Asian Pacific Islander neighborhoods in Oregon are 2.6 times more likely to host a commercial hazardous waste facility than other neighborhoods. Families should also have the right to know what ingredients are in their food. That way they can make better decisions on the products they buy for their families.

VOTE YES**#90 Oregon Open Primary Initiative**

Changes the current primary election rules to permit all candidates to be listed together and any registered voter to vote, regardless of their political party, such that the top two finishers would advance to the general election, regardless of party.

It is clear that many voters feel unhappy with our current election system. This could help voters who choose not to be a Republican or Democrat, and many of who are people of color and young people, to vote in the primaries. However it does nothing to reduce the influence of money in politics or make it easier to vote, like with same-day voter registration.

You be the judge/leaning no**What if I can't vote?**

You must be 18 years old and a US citizen to vote. If you have a felony conviction, you are eligible to re-register to vote after being released. Regardless of your ability to vote, you can still make a difference:

- Talk to people who can vote about ballot measures that matter to you.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about the issues you care about.
- Share this guide with a family member or a friend who can vote.





Three Simple Steps to Voting

Oregon is a vote-by-mail state. A ballot will be mailed to all registered voters. Not sure if you are registered? You have until October 14 to register — Call: 1.866.673.VOTE to find out if you are registered at your current address.

1. Once you fill in your ballot, place it in the secrecy envelope, seal it, and put it in the return envelope.
2. Make sure to sign the return envelope after verifying your name and current residence address are correct.
3. Place a stamp on the return envelope and mail it back. If it's after October 30, you'll need to drop off your ballot at an official ballot site. **All ballots must be received by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day in order to be counted.**

STRONG FAMILIES is a project of Forward Together. Western States Center, Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, and Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays — Black Chapter are Oregon-based members of Strong Families, joining more than 125 groups working in Oregon and nationally, to change how we think, feel, act, and make policy about families.

