

## State of Oregon Elections

I am writing to you before the election results are known to be fully transparent to both of you as to the state of elections in our state. I am not writing to tell you what I think you want to hear, but rather I feel it is my duty to inform you as to the current status of elections in Oregon. Thank you both for throwing your hat in the ring to serve the voters of Oregon as Secretary of State. Public service is a noble profession.

When one of you takes office in January you will be the fourth Secretary we have had in 4 years and one month, and the fifth Secretary in the past six years. During that time, we have also had four Deputy Secretaries and three Information Services (ISD) directors. As a result of this constant change in the executive team there is a lack of strategic vision and plans for the agency, and staff are not focused due to that lack of vision and leadership. I am not stating this to attach blame because Secretary Richardson's cancer was no one's fault, but simply to recognize that that lack of vision and leadership over the past few years has really set the agency back.

The Election Division's relationship with county election officials has never been stronger and I am confident they have shared that with you. There exist relationships of trust and partnership that are essential to successful elections in any state.

Our relationship with federal partners also has never been stronger. We have great support and partnership with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) which is part of the Department of Homeland Security both through our local representatives and from headquarters in DC. CISA has done onsite security assessments in each of our 36 counties and has also helped us with tabletop exercises and COVID planning. Our partnership with them has really helped to improve the security understanding and posture of our counties.

We also have enjoyed a productive partnership with the FBI. They have worked with us on voter education and battling mis/disinformation. They partnered with us for our Cyber Summit back in February. Most importantly they were a great resource when Tillamook County was taken down with ransomware earlier this year. We have participated in tabletop exercises with them and received classified briefings at their secure facility.

In Oregon we have created a model for the rest of the country through our TIGER (Threat Information Gathering and Election Resources) team. It is a dedicated team to help secure our elections that consists of members of the Elections Division, Department of Homeland Security, Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Oregon National Guard, Oregon Office of Emergency Management, Oregon Titan Fusion Center, US Postal Service Inspector General, and

the Cyber Security Services section of the Oregon Chief Information Security Officer's office.

Even with all these successful partnerships, the Elections Division struggles to get support from the agency support divisions. There are major technology challenges ahead in elections. We have a lot of technical debt, meaning systems that are old and out of date versions some of which are no longer supported. A sampling of requested projects is listed below.

Existing requested improvements:

- Multifactor authentication for security of all OCVR users. (Requested 2/2017)
- Resiliency for public facing election systems. (Requested 2/2018)
- Ballot tracking subscription service. (Requested 2/2018)
- Voter registration change subscription service. (Requested 2/2018)
- Adding "accepted" to the list of statuses in the MyVote tracking screen.
- OCVR replacement.
- ORESTAR replacement.
- OCVR system auditing tool.
- Integrating Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) information automatically into OCVR.
- Create an API (application program interface) between the ORESTAR Campaign Finance database and Data.gov to increase transparency without risking failure to the application.
- Real time data transfers with DMV for online registration and Oregon Motor Voter.
- There is a list of 56 known bugs or problems with election systems that was provided to the Information Services Director in January.

Many of these projects have been talked about and/or worked on for years but never completed and successfully deployed. Most of the projects that have been completed and rolled out in the past couple of years have had to be undone because there were changes made that resulted in breaking other things.

Some of our election systems are running on Windows Server 2008. End-of-life mainstream support from Microsoft ended back on January 13, 2015, and all support ended on January 14, 2020. Our public facing websites are single threaded through one power supply on the capitol mall and one internet connection. There is no redundancy or resiliency or plan to provide either.

ORESTAR is outdated, not user friendly, and most important there is no resiliency. This is our main connection with Oregonians for election services. ORESTAR includes campaign finance transactions, online voter registration, candidate filing, voters

pamphlet statement submissions, ballot tracking, dropbox locator, accessible ballots and all languages and features of MyVote.

OCVR is outdated and unable to accommodate many modern tools that we need to add for our operations and those of the 36 counties. OCVR was built back in 2004. It is the central voter registration database for all voters in the state and is a vital part of each county's election administration. The counties rely on this system to administer their elections and they were promised that it would be kept up to current technology standards when they gave up their own databases 15 years ago. OCVR uses old technology that requires transactions to be done in batches instead of real time. When files are transferred, say from DMV for online registration, a batch is sent over every night. People who register online often go to check that their registration was received immediately thereafter only to find that none of the changes show on the screen. With batch processing it can take one or more days for the information to post.

Major legislative changes in elections are upon us. Campaign finance limits will likely be passed and need to be implemented in 2021. New district lines will need to be setup after redistricting. This is the election administration part or redistricting, not the drawing of the lines that may also end up on your plate. There is the major rollback of automatic registration that will take place after HB 2015 takes effect on January 4<sup>th</sup>. Only those seeking a Real ID compliant license will be automatically registered. We reached out to the Governor about technology solution options at DMV in the spring but have not had any update on what she has been able to do. There will also likely be several legislative proposals in the 2021 session. More bills regarding elections are introduced in the session after a presidential election than any other.

This year, the Elections Division received \$6,029,047 in Help America Vote Act funds and \$5,656,663 in CARES Act funds from the federal government but were not authorized by the Oregon legislature to spend a penny of the \$11.7 million. All of the CARES Act funds must be returned by 12/31/2020 because they were not used.

The Elections Division had three positions cut during this summer's budget cuts. Being reliant on general funds, Elections usually takes the biggest hit in the agency when there are across the board budget cuts. This session the legislature rejected our request for a social media/public records position. We have had more public records requests this election cycle than the previous couple combined. With all of the misinformation about elections, especially on social media, we were hoping to have someone to monitor that and educate voters and call out misinformation like most other states have.

Finally, I don't want you to be surprised if you hear I am interviewing for new jobs. It is not because I don't want to work for either of you, but rather because I cannot succeed with the current state of technology and lack of support in the agency. I don't believe

anyone will be able to succeed. I believe the best path forward for a new Secretary of State is to prioritize those issues I identified above and to implement them in a nonpartisan manner with the full cooperation of county election officials. There are exciting opportunities in elections; but in order to succeed a major culture shift will be required in the support divisions and a long term strategic plan established. If you agree with these priorities and strategy, I would be willing to discuss staying on as a part of your administration. There are so many opportunities for improving elections right now throughout the country that I want to use my talents and abilities to effectuate the most good. As things currently stand, I cannot do that in Oregon, but with your leadership anything is possible.

If either of you have any questions or concerns about this election over the next month while we certify the results, or if there is any assistance I can provide in a transition, please don't hesitate to call my personal cell at [REDACTED].

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