

## RESOLUTION 34

# Support and Expand Oregon's Vote-by-Mail Elections in Other States

Submitted by Oregon AFL-CIO

**W**HEREAS, the experience in Oregon proves Vote-by-Mail is a successful, fraud-free, and voter-friendly model for election administration; and

WHEREAS, Vote-by-Mail elections result in increased voter participation with Oregon having the third-highest turnout in the nation at 86.5 percent and the highest among states in the 2004 presidential election that do not have same-day voter registration; and

WHEREAS, Oregon's union movement has used Vote-by-Mail to improve the participation of union members and their family members in the state's elections, reaching a 91 percent turnout of union household voters in 2004; and

WHEREAS, Vote-by-Mail in Oregon has been used in local elections since 1981 and has resulted in increased voter participation in these elections; and

WHEREAS, Vote-by-Mail is voter friendly and convenient by eliminating the need for voters to go to a polling place and stand in line for their turn to vote, by accommodating shift workers as well as disabled voters and by giving the voter two weeks to make a reasoned decision about their votes in their own home; and

WHEREAS, Vote-by-Mail provides a paper trail of optical scan ballots that can be recounted by

machine or by hand to prove that every vote was counted accurately; and

WHEREAS, every signature of every voter is checked on Vote-by-Mail ballots by election officials to safeguard the system against fraud; and

WHEREAS, Vote-by-Mail ballots are not forwarded by the U.S. Postal Service but returned to election clerks to keep voter rolls accurate and constantly updated; and

WHEREAS, centralized supervision of ballot processing in county clerks' offices maintains uniformity and strict compliance with laws throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, Vote-by-Mail elections not only increase participation, are convenient, accurate and fraud free, they also cost taxpayers one-third less than polling place elections;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Oregon AFL-CIO adopt and forward this resolution to the national AFL-CIO and ask that the national AFL-CIO distribute educational materials in support of Vote-by-Mail to their affiliates; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the national AFL-CIO encourage affiliates to pursue statewide and local election reform to allow for permanent absentee voter status, test of Vote-by-Mail elections and ultimately permanent Vote-by-Mail elections in each state.