

## **Multnomah County Ballot Measure 26-231**

**Official Title:** Amends charter: voting rights to be extended as legally allowed

**Question:** Should charter require County to extend the right to vote, including to noncitizens, to the fullest extent allowed by law?

**Financial Impact:** Unclear

**Probable Results of “Yes” Vote:** The right to vote in county elections would be extended, including to noncitizens, to the fullest extent allowed by law.

**Probable Results of “No” Vote:** The Charter would continue not to address voter qualifications.

**Background:** The current County Charter does not address voter qualifications or registration for elections of County officers and on County measures. State law provides that County residents who are United States citizens 18 years of age or older are eligible to register to vote. Registered voters can vote in local, state, and federal elections, with limited exceptions.

This amendment would not immediately change existing voting rights in County elections, but directs the County to take action to extend the right to vote as allowed by law. If this amendment is adopted by voters, the County first would determine whether and to what extent the law allows the County to extend the right to vote to additional individuals (including noncitizens). The County then would take steps to extend the right to vote to the extent allowed by law

**Summary of Measure:** Amends the County Charter by adding language requiring the County to extend the right to vote, including to noncitizens, to the fullest extent allowed by law. This amendment would apply only to the right to vote in elections for County officers (Chair, Commissioner, Sheriff, and Auditor) and on County measures (initiatives, referenda, or referrals of County ordinances or Charter amendments).

### **Supporters Say:**

- The goal is to get a broad measure on the ballot and let the courts give Multnomah County a roadmap on what is legally possible.
- We should enfranchise all members of our community since diverse perspectives help address challenges and develop solutions that work for everyone.
- Research shows that civic engagement, including voting, increases individual wellbeing and contributes to positive public health outcomes.

### **Opponents Say:**

- The Oregon Constitution allows only citizens of the United States the right to vote.
- This will tie the County up in expensive legal battles.
- Allowing noncitizens to vote dilutes the value of citizenship, including for those who have gone through the legal process of becoming a citizen.