



Written by [James Murphy](#) on May 18, 2023

Another Oregon County May Have Voted to Explore a Move to Idaho

Although not yet official, the Greater Idaho movement, which looks to move eastern Oregon counties into Idaho, a state more in tune with eastern Oregon's political and cultural values, is claiming that the movement has grabbed a 12th county in its quest.

Election-night totals show that Wallowa County in far northeast Oregon passed the measure by a slim margin of 1,721 "yes" votes to 1,700 "no" votes. However, Oregon law allows for ballots postmarked by 8:00 p.m. on election day to be counted if they arrive at election offices within seven days.



Gary Halvorson, Oregon State Archives
Wallowa County, Oregon

Therefore, election officials warn that the final result may not be known for a full week.

In a [press release](#), the Greater Idaho movement points out that, in the past, such late ballots have generally favored the "yes" votes as opposed to the "no" votes:

Since the introduction of a law that allows ballots to be received after election day if they were mailed on or before election day, the final election results in favor of Greater Idaho ballot measures have always been one to four percentage points higher than the election night results, so the Greater Idaho movement feels confident that their measure has won the Wallowa County election, even though results at 2pm PT today only showed their measure ahead with 50.3% of the vote. Since the movement's first election 6 election cycles ago, it had averaged 62% in favor and 38% opposed, a ratio of 1.63 to 1.

The Wallowa County voter turnout was reported to be 55 percent, more than double the statewide average for the May election.

Greater Idaho had theories as to why the vote was so close in the rural county.

"Wallowa County only has two percent of the population of eastern Oregon, and its beautiful mountain views draw an unusually large percentage of upper-income residents from the Willamette Valley, who may have been less supportive of joining Idaho," the press release noted.

But Greater Idaho claims that there were more nefarious reasons for the close election as well:

Portland Democrats outspent them in Wallowa County to level false accusations. Their ads claimed that far-right individuals and groups support the movement, but had no evidence that the movement supports those individuals or groups. The ads implied that those far-right groups are the people behind the movement, but Greater Idaho leadership says they've never been contacted by those individuals or groups



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In addition, Greater Idaho specifically accused former Democratic State Representative Ben Unger and the left-wing advocacy group Western States Strategies of sending out illegal mailers in Wallowa County in which they didn't reveal who was sending them — an Oregon law.

Greater Idaho has filed a complaint with the state regarding the allegedly illegal mailers.

Assuming the Wallowa County vote holds, it would make it the 12th county to look into a move to Idaho.

Until now it has largely been western Oregon's strategy to ignore the movement, probably since its goal is so unlikely. Are the alleged actions of Unger and Western State Strategies a sign that folks in Portland and Eugene are starting to take note of the movement?

Oregon Democrats have thus far refused even a hearing on [SJM 2](#), a joint memorial calling for a legislative hearing on the relocation of the approving counties to Idaho, citing potential conflicts of interest and the need for vote-explanation documents.

The other state involved, Idaho, has already [passed](#) a nonbinding measure calling for formal talks between the Idaho and Oregon legislatures to discuss a move of those counties to the Gem State.

Even if Greater Idaho were able to convince heavily Democratic western Oregon to consent to their demands, the possibility of the movement's success is limited, as it would also need federal approval to move state borders.



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