



## **Testimony in Support of the Oregon Voting Rights Act**

**Submitted by: Grayson Dempsey, Executive Director  
NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon, NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon Foundation**

Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee:

As advocates for reproductive justice, NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon understands the importance of ensuring that all Oregonians - regardless of their circumstances - have a voice in the Democratic process. On behalf of NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon, I respectfully request that the committee pass H.B. 3310, the Oregon Voting Rights Act.

NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon is dedicated to developing and sustaining a constituency that uses the political process to guarantee every woman the right to make personal decisions regarding the full range of reproductive choices, including preventing unintended pregnancy, bearing healthy children, and choosing legal abortion.

Reproductive justice is inherently connected to the ability to have a voice in the democratic process. The Oregon Voting Rights Act (OVRA) would help ensure that voting systems implemented by Oregon's school districts, education service districts, and community colleges align with the National Voting Rights Act (NVRA). The Oregon Voting Rights Act (OVRA) is a bill to help ensure that every voter has an equal opportunity to elect the candidate of their his or her choice. The OVRA strengthens democracy by creating a community-driven process that empowers local governments and community to ensure that all communities have a meaningful voice in local elections. It would establish a process that ensures communities of color and other underrepresented communities are heard, and represented in government. Communities should be able to choose voting systems that work for them.

If we are ever going to have a truly representative government, it is essential that all communities are able to have access to the democratic process. Local democracy is strongest when everyone is engaged and has an opportunity to have their voice heard. But across Oregon state, election systems have failed to keep up with the changing demographics of our cities, towns and school districts, sometimes leaving communities of color excluded from a fair chance at representation.

**Today, 7 of the 10 most diverse communities in Oregon have never had a person of color elected on their school boards.** As NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon works with school board members to ensure that all students - regardless of their circumstances - have access to comprehensive sexuality education and reproductive healthcare, it is imperative that our elected leaders represent - and are elected by - the communities they serve.

NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon supports H.B. 3310, as an important first step to promote healthy democracy by empowering people at the local level to work with their elected officials to ensure all voices in the community are heard, and we respectfully urge you to support this bill.