



March 9th, 2021

House Committee on Rules
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2366: Restoration of Voting Rights

Chair and Majority Leader Smith Warner, Vice Chair and Minority Leader Drazan and members of the committee,

My name is Andrea Valderrama and I am here representing the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon (ACLU of Oregon). We are a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of civil liberties and civil rights, with more than 28,415 members statewide. We are here today in support of HB 2366 in coalition with other advocates here this morning.

The ACLU has defended the voting rights of Black, indigenous, people of color for most of our history, and continues to do so even today¹. We challenged the “poll tax”—designed to prevent black Americans from voting—decades before a constitutional amendment abolished the practice in 1964, and we have been the primary enforcer of the Voting Rights Act.

We believe that the removal of voting rights is an affront to civil liberties and should not be connected to punishment. We support HB 2366 because:

- **Voting is a cornerstone of our democracy, and everyone, especially BIPOC community members, should have the opportunity to vote for elected representatives making decisions about their families and futures.** Poll taxes and literacy tests were among some of the earlier tactics used to prevent African Americans and other BIPOC communities from voting, and taking away this right as additional punishment after time has been served is unjustifiable. Oregon should lead in our commitment of ending this type of voter disenfranchisement.
- **Civic engagement, specifically voting, increases the ability for reintegration, reducing recidivism, and making communities safer.** In the wake of the COVID 19 crisis, we urge you to make it easier for Oregonians to reintegrate back into their communities, not harder. Supporting this bill would provide a clear path towards more successful reintegration.
- **Implementation of this bill is highly feasible.** Oregon leads the nation with vote by mail, automatic voter registration, paid postage, and is the easiest state to vote in.

For these reasons, the ACLU of Oregon urges you to support SB 571.

Thank you,

¹ <https://www.aclu.org/news/voting-rights/president-elect-bidens-voting-rights-to-do-list/>



Andrea Valderrama, Policy Director
ACLU of Oregon