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Portland, OR 97202

Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation
Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee,

Good morning Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair, and members of the committee and thank you for your time today. I'm excited to give my support today in favor of Senate Bill 571 alongside so many important advocates. I'm a 16 year-old resident of Portland Oregon, and a member of the youth climate justice movement Sunrise Movement PDX. We're working to build a world that is sustainable and just and equitable for all people; allowing incarcerated humans to vote is a crucial part of this.

Racial justice is climate justice. Black and Brown humans are disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis and disproportionately incarcerated compared to white people. As Senator Merkley and Senator Manning explained, the 13th amendment legalized slavery for those who were convicted of a crime, and as a result of this, America now sees rates of incarceration higher than any other country. On top of that, Black Americans are already more than four times as likely to lose their voting rights than the rest of the voting-age population.

Regarding Senate Bill 571, it's appalling to me that incarcerated people can be counted as part of a census, but not be allowed to vote, especially since their populations mostly count towards rural, white populations because of where prisons are located.

We should look to countries around the world as examples- countries such as South Africa, Canada, Ireland, and Spain all allow incarcerated humans to vote. Taking away the rights of people who are in prison unnecessarily strips them of their humanity, and makes reintegrating back into free society that much more difficult.

When we uplift our fellow humans, our world becomes more sustainable, healthier, and more livable for all people. SB 571, as well as the other legislation we heard about today, SJM2 and SJR10, are an exciting step in the right direction.

Thank you for your time today,

Ben Stevenson
Sunrise Movement PDX