

RE: Support Guaranteeing the Right to Vote, SB 579  
Senate Committee on Judiciary  
<January 24, 2023>

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, My name is **Katelyn Williams** and I live in **Portland, OR**. I am writing to testify in strong support for Guaranteeing the Right to Vote, SB 579, which will ensure every eligible Oregonian can register to vote, update their voter registration, and vote in elections based on where they resided prior to incarceration. The right to vote is enshrined in our constitution and fundamental to a vibrant and participatory democracy. Yet, around 12,000 people in Oregon are currently denied their right to vote, leading to low-income, Black, Indigenous, and Latine people being disproportionately disenfranchised. Guaranteeing the Right to Vote fulfills the promise of our democracy while improving public safety, and addressing racial and socioeconomic inequities.

**People who are incarcerated should have rights like all of us. Even though they have done crimes resulting in their current situation, they are still humans with opinions about politics and deserve to have their voice heard.**

As an Oregonian, I know that connection to community through civic engagement while incarcerated leads to healthier communities, that voting is a civic right and responsibility, and that we can address unjust impacts of mass incarceration.

I am not alone. This legislation is supported by over 40 civil rights organizations, faith-based groups, as well as dozens of currently and formerly incarcerated people. Please ensure that Guaranteeing the Right to Vote, SB 579, is passed out of committee.

Thank you,

**Katelyn Williams**