

RE: Support for 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 Brendan Adamczyk and I live in Eugene. 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 currently, roughly 12,000 people in Oregon are currently denied their right to vote, leading to the disproportionate disenfranchisement of low-income, Black, Indigenous, and Latino/a people. Guaranteeing the Right to Vote fulfills the promise of our democracy while improving public safety, and addressing racial and socioeconomic inequities.

As a recent graduate of the University of Oregon (Class of 2020) and current master's student back at the University of Oregon (Class of 2024), I have been told often about the role that Oregon has played as a trailblazer in the national fight against social inequality. Moreover, from kindergarten through the classes I took just last term, I have also learned time and again that in the United States, Americans have certain unalienable rights, chief among them the right – **not a privilege, but a right** – to vote in elections. Just because someone is incarcerated does not mean they should be stripped of the ability to exercise this vital part of being an American.

In addition, 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 guaranteed to all Americans, and that by taking steps like passing SB 579, we as a state can begin to address the unjust impacts of mass incarceration.

I am not alone in my support for this important bill. This legislation is supported by more than 40 civil rights organizations and faith-based groups throughout Oregon 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.**

With respect,

Brendan Adamczyk