

Submitter: Ashley Shackelford  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary  
Measure: SB579

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

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Ashley and I live in Milwaukie/Oak Grove. 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 the disproportionate disenfranchisement of low-income, Black, Indigenous, and Latine people. Guaranteeing the Right to Vote fulfills the promise of our democracy while improving public safety, and addressing racial and socioeconomic inequities.

Voting is one of the most sacred American duties- without the drive to have representation in government, there would be no America. Denying any American who meets the legal voting age of their right to vote is not only violating the spirit of the constitution, but it disenfranchises citizens in a way that does not increase rehabilitation or lend to the decrease of recidivism. By restoring voting rights to incarcerated people, Oregon can show that we care deeply about democracy and representing all citizens with the hope for a brighter future.

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 in my support for this important bill. 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,

Ashley Shackelford