



Legislative Testimony

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

January 26, 2023

The Honorable Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Subject: Senate Bill 579

Chair Prozanski and members of the committee, my name is Rob Persson, and I serve as the Assistant Director of the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) Operations Division. I am providing written testimony regarding Senate Bill (SB) 579.

What the Bill Does:

SB 579 allows persons convicted of a felony crime to register to vote, update their voter registration, and vote in elections while incarcerated. It further specifies that the person's residence, and thus their county for voter registration purposes, will be where they last resided before they were incarcerated.

Outlined below are logistical challenges and potential impacts to the agency.

No Data Field for AIC State ID numbers:

The Secretary of State (SOS) voter registration card does not have a place for a State Identification or "SID" number. Because of the significant number of duplicate names and aliases in DOC's population, having a SID number on the incoming voter and jury summons mail would be essential to DOC's ability to implement this bill within its institutions. Although DOC mailroom staff are allowed the flexibility to look up a person's SID number, if they have extra time to do so, DOC returns incoming mail without a SID number to the sender. DOC could not take on the liability of looking up names and aliases in an attempt to determine the correct SID number in an effort to direct a ballot or jury summons to the correct person, institution, and unit.

DOC has been informed the SOS cannot, at this time, modify its voter registration card and existing data system to include a field for a SID number. This inability to record a SID number for the counties to include on ballots and jury summons – provided all 36 counties have the ability to add the new SID number data field to their mailing systems – presents operational challenges.

Voter Registration Cards:

Voter registration cards are not postage paid. New voters without an Oregon identification, or who do not have or cannot recall their social security number, have additional identification requirements to provide at the time of mail-in registration. If these items can be obtained, it would add to the cost of postage. It should be noted that DOC records do not include a person's

prior residential address, so county clerks and SOS would need to follow their own internal procedures for verifying the accuracy of the information provided.

Passage of this bill could also open up DOC to new litigation issues around receipt and transmittal of voter ballots to the intended recipients, voter confidentiality, and the timely outgoing transmittal of completed ballots. DOC is ready to work with this Committee on this subject, and I look forward to continuing to work with our external partners on ways to reduce operational impacts to the agency.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Submitted by:

Oregon Department of Corrections

Rob Persson, Assistant Director for Operations Division

Rob.J.Persson@doc.oregon.gov