



To: Members of the Senate Committee On Judiciary
From: Sponsors, Inc.
Submitted by Paul Solomon, Co-Executive Director
Date: January 26, 2023
Re. Support for SB 579

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

I write to you today in support of SB 579.

Sponsors, Inc., is a national leader in the delivery of prisoner reentry services. We offer a broad range of services—case management, employment assistance, housing, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, mental health services and mentoring—that people need in order to be successful upon returning to their community.

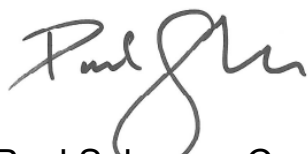
Representation matters, especially in the United States where representation is decided by those who vote. Our constitution guarantees free elections, equal protection under the law, and freedom of speech. Voting is also fundamental to our rights and freedom as Oregonians.

Approximately 95% of incarcerated people will re-enter society after completing their sentence and work jobs, raise families, and pay taxes in their communities. Making sure Oregonians can vote while incarcerated allows them to feel involved in their communities, and increases the success of reintegration when they come back. Voting also allows incarcerated people to advocate for their children and loved ones who remain in their communities. Everyone, including people who are incarcerated, should have access to the ballot box so they can have a say in the decisions that impact their lives and their loved ones.

Oregon leads the country in access to voting for people with conviction histories as we allow for individuals who have completed their sentence or are on parole/probation to vote. Yet, we are leaving over approximately 12,000 Oregonians from having a say in our representative Democracy.

Treating people who are serving their sentences in our correctional facilities as full citizens is a moral imperative and is legislation that ought to pass this session. We ask that you please support SB 579 and pass it out of committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Solomon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paul" and the last name "Solomon" written in a single continuous stroke.

Paul Solomon, Co-Executive Director