

Submitter: Ben Stevenson
On Behalf Of: Sunrise Movement PDX
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB579

RE: Support Guaranteeing the Right to Vote, SB 579
Senate Committee on Judiciary
January 26th, 2023

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

My name is Ben Stevenson and I am a high-schooler at Cleveland High School in Portland. I am writing on behalf of Sunrise Movement PDX. At Sunrise PDX, we are building a movement of young people to make climate justice an urgent priority and fight for an equitable and sustainable world. Restoring the right to vote to people that are incarcerated is a crucial part of this vision. Today I am writing to testify in strong support of 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.

Racial justice is climate justice. Black and brown people are disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis and disproportionately incarcerated compared to white people. Due to biases and inequities in our criminal legal system, Black Americans are more than four times as likely to lose their voting rights than the rest of the voting-age population. In Oregon, 9% of incarcerated people are Black, despite Black people accounting for 2% of the state's residents. SB 579 addresses the systemic injustice of disproportionate disenfranchisement of low-income, Black, Indigenous, and Latine people.

When we uplift the voices and civil rights of our fellow Oregonians, we take the first step towards a just, sustainable Oregon. As a representative of Sunrise PDX, I ask that you please support SB 579 and pass it out of this committee.

Thank you,

Ben Stevenson
Sunrise Movement PDX