

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

January 26, 2023

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

My name is Caroline Phillips and I am writing today on behalf of Oregon Ranked Choice Voting Advocates. We are a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization championing ranked choice voting statewide in Oregon. We are part of a broad coalition that has the support of over 40 civil rights organizations, faith-based groups, as well as dozens of currently and formerly incarcerated people. 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.

Oregon legislators have recognized the importance of protecting and expanding voter rights – from universal vote-by-mail to automatic voter registration. Now, legislators have an opportunity to move Oregon forward by following in the footsteps of Maine, Vermont, Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico.

Denying the right to vote for people with felony convictions disproportionately affects low-income, Black, and Indigenous populations. Guaranteeing the Right to Vote is the next step in ensuring *all* Oregonians, no matter race, area code, or income, have access to the ballot box and that their voices are heard.

Our team at Oregon Ranked Choice Voting Advocates is dedicated to bringing more voices into our elections and greater diversity to our government. We support SB 579 as a cornerstone of establishing that every Oregonian has an equal say in what happens in our communities and that our government is reflective of the values of all of its constituents.

As a representative of Oregon Ranked Choice Voting Advocates, we ask that you please support SB 579 and pass it out of committee.

Thank you,

Caroline Phillips, she/her
Communications Coordinator
Oregon Ranked Choice Voting Advocates

