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**Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon**

January 26, 2023

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

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon has made access to democracy a top priority. Reproductive freedom and health care are often attacked at the ballot box and unfairly politicized, so we advocate for policies that ensure everyone can engage in our democratic process to defend their bodily autonomy and access to health care. We are writing 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

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 low-income, Black, Indigenous, and Latine people being disproportionately disenfranchised.

We believe that all people have the right to choose whether and when to parent, and the right to parent the children they have in safe and sustainable communities. Guaranteeing the right to vote for all Oregonians, including those who are incarcerated, keeps people involved in our communities and helps make our communities safer. More than 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.

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon believes that access to the ballot box is a fundamental civil right, and we know how critical it is for marginalized communities to be able to leverage their right to participate in democracy to defend their rights and advance justice in their communities. To facilitate full and robust voter engagement in our elections, we need to decrease barriers and expand access so that every Oregonian's voice can be heard at the ballot box. From automatic voter registration to paid postage for ballots, Oregon has long been a vanguard and national leader in improving access to the ballot.

As an organization that does voter registration and get-out-the-vote work, we understand that even the smallest of barriers can prevent marginalized voters from engaging in the voting process. SB 579 is a simple, effective change that will strengthen our democracy by removing barriers to voting access and ensure that Oregon can achieve an inclusive, fair and effective elections system.

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon respectfully urges the committee's support of SB 579.

Thank you,

Cassie Purdy  
Political Director  
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon