

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

**January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

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

My name is Justin Low, and I live in Aloha, Oregon. 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.

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 the disproportionate disenfranchisement of low-income, Black, Indigenous, and Latine people. Guaranteeing the Right to Vote fulfills the promise of our democracy while improving public safety, and addressing racial and socioeconomic inequities.

As a researcher in the criminal justice field, I've come across many studies that support the concept of social reintegration and strong community ties as a means for reducing the likelihood of individuals re-offending.<sup>1 2 3</sup> Therefore, it is in the interest of our community, democracy, and civic health that we guarantee the right to vote for Oregonians in custody. In a state that prides itself in the leaps and bounds it has made in voting accessibility, this is one of the next big steps that Oregon can take to forever cement its place as a national leader.

I am not alone in my support for this important bill. This legislation is supported by over 40 civil rights organizations, faith-based groups, as well as dozens of currently and formerly incarcerated people. Please ensure that Guaranteeing the Right to Vote, SB 579, is passed out of committee.

Thank you,  
Justin Low

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations. (2012). *Introductory Handbook on the Prevention of Recidivism and the Social Reintegration of Offenders*. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Retrieved from [https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/crimeprevention/12-55107\\_Ebook.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/crimeprevention/12-55107_Ebook.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Berg, M. T., & Huebner, B. M. (2011). Reentry and the ties that bind: An examination of social ties, employment, and recidivism. *Justice Quarterly*, 28(2), 382–410. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2010.498383>.

<sup>3</sup> Hamilton-Smith, G. P., & Vogel, M. (2012). The violence of voicelessness: The impact of felony disenfranchisement on recidivism. *Berkeley La Raza Law Journal*, 22(2), 408–432.