

Submitter: Isabela Villarreal

On Behalf Of: Robert Emery

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Measure: Support SB 579, Guaranteeing the Right to Vote

Hello,

3-20-23

I'm a state prisoner here in Oregon and would like to have my right to vote restored to me. I believe voting is a human right, and a duty of every person and I absolutely would like to provide written testimony to the legislature to share my perspective. To answer your questions that were on the card sent to me I will answer them in order.

1. No I've never voted, I was a convicted felon at age 18.

2. Yes I do support this legislation.

3. thru 6 are basically the same question written in different forms, given the right to vote, even while in prison would give me/us the sense that we're still a part of society, that our opinions matter, and that we matter. As it is right now we've been cast aside and thrown out like trash (we're often seen as less than human and we prisoners often internalize these opinions and start to believe them ourselves, it's a twisted form of Stockholm syndrome that is self-perpetuating, and no good can come from this. As a voter society,

politicians, etc see you differently and are more likely to advocate for more humane treatment of prisoners, offer more treatment courses, schooling, work training and so on. I have never seen myself as a "part of society" and not being allowed to vote is a part of that. I understand that I have committed crimes and must pay for them, what I protest is warehousing humans in inhumane conditions of confinement, when I go on medical trips to the hospital I see roads stacked with litter, dilapidated homes, graffiti on overpasses, walls, etc and I always think to myself with our trucking abilities nowadays being so advanced why can't I be paid to clean these things, why can't I pay room & board for my cell from my paychecks and pay victim restitution etc? This doesn't have to be forced labor, most guys in here would readily take these jobs, like fire crews / and in this way we can reintegrate back into society feeling that we've actually paid our debts and we are worthy of society's forgiveness for our crimes. These are the types of things I would vote for if I could, and as a voter I could communicate

These ideas to my Senators and Congress
people with a real chance they would
actually listen as I would be a
constituent [voting] again.

Lastly I'd like to reiterate that voting
is a Human Right, every person should
have a voice no matter how big or
small.

Thank you



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