

Submitter: Isabela Villarreal  
On Behalf Of: Edward Yeoman  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure: Support SB 579, Guaranteeing the Right to Vote

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To Whom it May Concern:

March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023

My name is Edward Yeoman and I am currently incarcerated. I've been incarcerated since I was 18 years old, for 13 years now, but I was registered to vote and voted while at Rogue Valley Youth Correctional facility; I really got into it, delving into more about the person or Bill to be voted on. Since I've left Rogue Valley I have not voted, but have helped to draft Bill proposals at Maclaren Youth Correctional Facility. Though if I could've been voting, I would've been voting still, as well as now. So yes I support this legislation.

So for me to vote again while incarcerated is, well, a right and being that I am incarcerated most are taken away, but the right to vote shouldn't be. To vote while I'm incarcerated means that I could be that one person who makes a difference in an election or making a Bill Law; it means that there is an extra 12,000 voters at least who could use their right as an American citizen to vote. For the United States constitution gives us that right; the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment defines a citizen as, "All persons born or naturalized in the United States" and the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment says that it is "the right of citizens of the United States to vote; so the question is are we still citizens even though we are incarcerated? We are (consider that some of us pay taxes). Though multiple Amendments have been added over time, none have changed the definition of a citizen nor do any of them (older or newer) say anything about losing our right to vote once incarcerated. So it is a choice of each state to deny that right.

So to the legislature I would say voting is a part of being a citizen in a Democratic society and to deny that right diminishes this Republic and who the founding fathers were. What causes us to be lesser citizens in society's eyes should not involve losing our right to vote once incarcerated, for we are still citizens if we were born here or naturalized. Is there a concern about a lack of knowledge about politics and voting? Provide a class. Or is there a fear of some kind that having incarcerated voters will change things negatively or that we would vote for a Bill or a candidate that would change things positively for us as adults in custod? Wouldn't it benefit you to have more potential voters? Please

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try and think of it objectively, maybe even think about what it would mean to you if you were incarcerated.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and consider what I've written.

With Respect from a Citizen AIC,  
Edward W. Yeoman  
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