

Submitter: Margaret Foley
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB579

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

I write to testify in strong support for Guaranteeing the Right to Vote, SB 579 to 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 the ability to fully participate in our democracy strengthens our democracy. Yet, around 12,000 people in Oregon currently are denied their right to vote, which disproportionately disenfranchises low-income, Black, Indigenous, and Latine people. Guaranteeing the Right to Vote fulfills the promise of our democracy, improves public safety, and addresses racial and socioeconomic inequities.

Being able to maintain local connections while incarcerated leads to healthier communities and allows us to address unjust impacts of mass incarceration. As someone who works in campaigns and advocacy at the grassroots level throughout Oregon, I have seen over and over how civic engagement creates the opportunity for people to connect with and engage in their communities and feel they have a stake in their future. The right to vote is a key aspect of this engagement and should not continue to be denied to Oregonians who are incarcerated.

Please ensure that Guaranteeing the Right to Vote, SB 579, is passed out of committee.