

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

January 26th, 2023

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

My name is Aishiki and I'm a student at Tigard High I am writing to testify in strong support for Guaranteeing the Right to Vote, SB 579, which will ensure that every eligible Oregonian can register to vote, update their voter registration, and vote in elections based on where they resided prior to incarceration. A right all Oregonians should have.

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.

I'm currently a policy intern under the ACLU of Oregon, and when researching some background information about this bill it had caught my attention that many states, and individual counties around the country have implemented policies where incarcerated persons can vote and engage in civic engagement. However one of the aspects about this bill is the agency counties and states had to enforce it, having the state step in for civic education and providing options to make the ballot box more accessible. Voting yes to this bill is crucial, but it is equally as crucial to ensure counties are being checked on to ensure ALL voices in Oregon count.

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 supported by other young voters and future voters, and dozens of currently and formerly incarcerated people. Please ensure that Guaranteeing the Right to Vote, SB 579, is passed out of committee.

Thank you for your time,

Aishiki Nag