



To: Senator Prozanski, Chair
Senator Thatcher, Vice-Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary
From: Lindsey Scholten, Oregon League of Conservation Voters
Date: January 26, 2023

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and members of the Committee:

For the record my name is Lindsey Scholten and I am the deputy director for the Oregon League of Conservation Voters. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 579.

The Oregon League of Conservation Voters or “OLCV” is a nonpartisan organization with about 20,000 members across the state. For 50 years, OLCV has worked to ensure our elected leaders and our state’s environmental policies represent and reflect the strong environmental values held by the people of Oregon.

OLCV strongly supports laws that help create a more inclusive democracy and increase voter access. And, we are proud to say that Oregon has long been on the forefront of ensuring the right to vote. It’s an Oregon value and one we should always keep moving forward on, including with passage of 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.

We are proud to be part of a broad coalition of more than 40 organizations supporting this bill. Our coalition includes faith-based groups, civil rights organizations, and community-based organizations, as well as many currently and formerly incarcerated people. This strong support comes because not only is the right to vote a deeply held value in Oregon, but it’s also the fundamental right upon which all our civil liberties rest.

At this moment, around 12,000 people in Oregon are currently denied their right to vote; and low-income, Black, Indigenous, and Latinx people are being disproportionately disenfranchised. We can and should do something about it. Everyone, including people who are incarcerated, should have access to the ballot box so they can have a say in the decisions that impact their lives. This is an important opportunity for our Oregon legislators to continue to show leadership on what it means to truly guarantee the right to vote.

On behalf of OLCV, I ask for your support of SB 579 to help create a more inclusive democracy that addresses racial and socioeconomic inequities. Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to submit testimony on this critical issue – guaranteeing the right to vote.

Lindsey Scholten
Deputy Director
Oregon League of Conservation Voters