

Submitter: Meghan O'Neill  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary  
Measure: SB579

RE: Support Guaranteeing the Right to Vote, SB 579  
Senate Committee on Judiciary  
January 26, 2023

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

My name is Meghan O'Neill and I live in Newport. I am writing to testify in strong support for Guaranteeing the Right to Vote, 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.

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.

We must expand our democracy. Representation doesn't work if not every Oregonian's voice is heard. It's the right thing to do, but also the logical and sensible thing to do. Democracies are healthier with more participation, not less. And we must hear from those most experienced in our justice system to make sure it is truly serving the needs of Oregonians.

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 dozens of currently and formerly incarcerated people. Please ensure that Guaranteeing the Right to Vote, SB 579, is passed out of committee.

Thank you,

Meghan O'Neill