

Submitter: Seth Litwin
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB579

RE: Support Guaranteeing the Right to Vote, SB 579
Senate Committee on Judiciary
January 27, 2012

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

My name is Seth Litwin and I live in Portland. 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.

I believe the right to vote is enshrined in our constitution, for all citizens, regardless of their crimes against the state and fellow citizens. It is critical for the dignity of those incarcerated, and to maintain their link to the communities in which they resided, participated in, and often continue to participate in while incarcerated. Most of these citizens will return back to society after their term, and they like all citizens deserve to have a voice in what that world looks like. Even if they never return to free society, they were born a part of that, and were a part of shaping the laws and customs of that world, even those that resulted in their sentence. A right to determine that should be maintained even while incarcerated or otherwise serving those sentences.

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.

I hope you will consider these opinions.

Thank you,

Seth Litwin