

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

January 28, 2023

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

My name is Emily McCadden 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.

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.

As a housing case manager and mutual aid organizer working closely alongside my houseless neighbors to meet their basic needs, I have seen how the legalized discrimination of people who have been incarcerated perpetuates injustice. Guaranteeing voting rights for Oregonians in prison is a step toward bringing the voices of the most targeted populations into important policy-making decisions that will directly impact them.

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,

Emily McCadden, MSW