

Submitter: Isabela Villarreal

On Behalf Of: Alexander Salterio

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Measure: Support Guaranteeing the Right to Vote, SB 579

March 17, 2023
Mr. Alexander M. Salterio
SID No. 21095183
Oregon State Correctional Institution (OSCI)
3405 Deer Park Dr. SE

Dear Next-Up Oregon:
My name is Alex and I am an Adult in Custody at OSCI here in Salem Oregon. I received your newsletter informing me of the recent proposal to restore voting rights for incarcerated individuals.

Prior to my incarceration, I was a registered voter in Oregon. Every time I had a chance to voice my opinion at the ballot box, I never hesitated to get involved. Voting, whether incarcerated or not, should be a fundamental right to all US citizens.

Having the ability to vote, as an incarcerated adult would be paramount in helping restore our sense of dignity and belonging to society. Having a felony conviction is a Scarlet Letter folks are forced to bear for their entire lives. We are disenfranchised and face discrimination while fighting for basic necessities the rest of society is given freely. This includes restricted access to housing, jobs, and the ability to travel as we wish. Incarcerated humans are just that, humans. We still belong to this county even though our freedoms have been temporarily restricted. The goal of rehabilitation should include our ability to participate in the basic elements of democracy in our country. Many criminals have not participated in the voting process, and having that chance while locked away could help provide a sense of belonging and facilitate rehabilitation.

To the Oregon legislature, please consider us AIC's as humans. Many of us contributed greatly to our communities before making our mistakes and losing our liberties. We feel this is the right time to invest in our futures and finally do something productive with our time here. With your help, we can contribute to democracy and our voice can be heard for change within.

Thank you for your time and efforts on our behalf.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Salterio

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Salterio', written over a horizontal line.