

Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to address your committee regarding Senate Bill 24-072.

My name is Mary Beth Corsentino. I am a native of Pueblo, Colorado, the proud granddaughter of Italian immigrants, a retired public-school educator, and a genetic Democrat. You see my grandparents became citizens with the assistance of the late state senator Vincent Massari during the Roosevelt administration. They never missed an election. Neither have I. Voting is part of who I am. But I am opposed to SB 24-072

A year ago, I stepped down as an officer of the Pueblo County Democratic Party. Most recently I served for eight years as its chairperson. Prior to that I was the party secretary. - all volunteer positions. During my work with the party, I was responsible for organizing the precinct caucuses. In my step-by-step caucus guide, I included the applications to work as an election judge, by the way a paid position, and encouraged attendees to submit them before leaving the caucus.. These applications were submitted in a timely manner to the county clerk following the caucus. Mail in ballots have required fewer judges, but these individuals now work more days than those in the past who worked only on election day. Most election judges are retired and for the most part older citizens. With all that being said, it still is difficult to fill all election judge positions necessary.

Poll watchers, on the other hand, are strictly volunteers. They must be trained on line by the secretary of state's office or state

party staff. As party chair, I was required by law to certify the watchers and, in many instances, help provide the training necessary. Watchers are often older citizens who may not have access to online training. I would help arrange this before I could certify them. More times than not, I personally would watch at various polling centers during the course of one day for an hour or two and then move on to another site. Recruiting watchers is necessary, especially in today's climate, but it definitely is not easy.

How awesome it was for me to learn that in the 2022 election there were 14 confined eligible voters in Pueblo County who voluntarily chose to vote in that election. These voters were provided the opportunity to vote in an efficient and fair way by permitting them to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

I believe the provisions in SB 24-072 place unnecessary requirements in my opinion upon the County Sheriff's Department and the County Election's Department. The existing system is more than adequate to facilitate voting for all confined eligible voters.

In summary, it is difficult now to recruit and sustain election judges and poll watchers. This bill would place an even greater burden on our already limited resources.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs

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SB24-072 Voting for Confined Eligible Electors

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Andrew Barton For Colorado Common Cause	<p>Here is where you can view Colorado Common Cause's full 2020 report on jail-based voting as referenced in Aly Belknap's verbal testimony, featuring survey responses from sheriffs & clerks.</p> <p>https://www.commoncause.org/colorado/resource/voting-behind-bars/</p>
Anne Duncan For themselves	<p>My name is Anne Duncan.</p> <p>While I am a member of the League of Women Voters, which supports this legislation, today I am speaking only for myself.</p> <p>The right to vote – to have a voice in the direction of our government – is to me one of the most fundamental and important rights of citizenship. Because of this belief I have worked since 2019 to register eligible incarcerated voters in the two Denver jails and since the 2020 Presidential election to help facilitate in-person voting. In the jails we see many first-time voters as well as intermittent voters. Because many have moved frequently or have been unhoused, even previously registered voters' registration may have lapsed. Without jail-based voting a significant number of our incarcerated voters would therefore be disenfranchised. Regardless of their confined status they are still citizens and they deserve the right to cast a ballot. Having the right to vote without the ability to cast a ballot, however, is meaningless.</p> <p>While incarcerated voters represent all political persuasions, they do have some insight into the workings of our justice system that most of us lack. In addition the opportunity to play a part in the political process may provide an important continuing connection with the community; those connections are critical.</p>

	<p>I had never expected to set foot in a jail, but I have never felt anything other than welcome. We have consistently experienced appreciation, even from those who are not eligible to vote. While I admit to being nervous the first time I heard metal barriers clang shut behind me I have never felt threatened. During voting periods we have had no disruptions. I firmly believe that providing these opportunities is worth the time required.</p> <p>My thanks go to Sheriff Diggins, the deputies and other jail staff, Clerk Lopez, Denver Elections staff, CCJRC, and all who have supported this very important work in Denver. I urge legislators to pass SB24-072 to make the opportunity to cast a ballot available to all eligible incarcerated voters in Colorado.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
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Voting for Confined Eligible Electors Testimony

My name is Kiyana Newell I am the Policy Manager at New Era Colorado, a nonpartisan, nonprofit that is a national leader in engaging young people in the political process. I am here today to urge a yes vote on SB24-072.

Since the organization's founding in 2006, New Era Colorado has registered over 250,000 young voters statewide*, led one of the most successful voter turnout campaigns in the country leading to 86% turnout among our base, and drove Colorado to have the third highest youth turnout in the state in 2020 at 71% Our mission is rooted in ensuring that every single eligible voter, incarcerated or not, has access to voter registration and the information necessary to make informed decisions at the ballot box.

SB24-072 is a vital next step to expand voting rights in Colorado. In the 2020 general election, out of an estimated eligible population of 5,205 confined voters, only 557 individuals gained ballot access and in the 2022 general election, 231 individuals received their ballot out of 4,876 eligible confined voters. By mandating one day of in-person voting at all 61 jails and detention centers in our state, this bill will ensure that confined voters have the opportunity to cast their ballots in a manner that is accessible.

Additionally, SB24-072 requires jails and detention centers to distribute major party candidate information and nonpartisan ballot issue and candidate information within their facilities. A survey conducted by CCJRC with confined voters illustrated that a significant reason for not voting was a lack of knowledge about candidates or issues. This provision is essential for ensuring that confined voters are informed about their voting options and the candidates and issues at stake.

According to the Prison Policy Initiative the majority of people in [Colorado's jails are Black, Indigenous or Hispanic/Latine](#). These rates are not surprising (though disturbing) given our nation's embedded history of racism and slavery. Refusing to allow eligible incarcerated people to vote will continue our nation's shameful history of racism by maintaining blatant racist, jail-based gerrymandering and disregard for basic human rights.

At New Era Colorado, we believe that voting is a fundamental human right that should be accessible to all individuals, including those who are incarcerated. If we are truly concerned about preserving democracy then allowing *every single eligible voter to vote is a logical step*. By providing incarcerated voters with the option to register to vote, non-biased information about candidates, as well as the option to vote in person, Colorado will do our best to protect and hear every voice in our democracy.

Vote YES on SB24-072 and take a stand for voting rights for all Coloradans. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.