



To: Chair Rosenbaum, Vice-Chair Ferrioli and Members of the Senate Committee on Rules
From: Justin Martin, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
Date: February 10, 2015
Subject: Please Support SB 331

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde are in full support of the policy within SB 331.

Oregon is truly unique when it comes to the relationship between the state and the tribes. Together, we have done amazing things, from Governor Atiyeh and the creation of the Commission on Indian Services, to Governor Kitzhaber's Executive Order 96-30, and then passage of SB 770, which put into statute the government-to-government relationship. We should all be proud as Oregonians of the work done to solidify a strong bond between the state and the tribes.

It has been fifty-years since the voting rights act of 1965, which prohibited racial discrimination in voting. Yet, American Indians still do not have equal representation at the ballot box. This traditionally underrepresented demographic makes up 1% of the total population in Oregon, but they are 3% of the incarcerated population.

Further compounding the problem of underrepresentation is how the Census Bureau counts incarcerated people as residents of their prison addresses. When Census prison counts are used for redistricting rather than the incarcerated person's home residence, communities with a large prison population get extra representation and the voting rights of everyone else are diluted. Due to the racially disparate rates of incarceration the voting strength of American Indian communities is negatively impacted.

Counting incarcerated people in the district where they are imprisoned rather than in their home communities means their voices and the voices of their communities can more easily be ignored. Your support of SB 331 will ensure the constitutional principle of "One Person One Vote" is upheld and extended to all of Oregon's population without special treatment for particular regions or industries.

It is paramount that we continue the hard work the state and all Oregonians have done to see the Nine Oregon Federally-Recognized Tribes are equally represented in our great state at the federal, state and local levels. Let's turn the corner and use this issue as an opportunity to ensure the equal distribution of representation on the basis of population for this underrepresented demographic.

Please support Senate Bill 331