

March 8, 2021

Dear House Rules Committee,

While I was in prison, my student loans did not stop accruing interest. Senators Wyden and Merkley did not cease being my representatives. I did not stop being an American citizen. My prison sentence was my punishment, as determined by a federal judge. It did not include a temporary loss of citizenship.

Politically active before my arrest, I tried to rally the women I was incarcerated with to become more politically active to address egregious human rights violations occurring in the prison. Many women did not even have the most basic understanding of civics. Their parents had either been in prison or on probation or parole their whole lives, no one had been legally allowed to vote. They never had a tangible example of our democracy. They did not believe it truly existed.

I believed that it did. Because I believed I had political power, I utilized it. I am in constant communication with all of my representatives at the state and federal level. Because of that, I have been able to surmount barriers that others have found insurmountable. I was able to obtain higher education and utilize it to create social mobility and a higher income potential. But it started with believing I had political power, and then leveraging it.

Creating a more informed and engaged citizenry can only improve our society. Allow all citizens to vote, full stop.

Sincerely,
Morgan Godvin