

# YWCA IS ON A MISSION

March 9, 2021

Barbara Smith Warner, Chair  
House Committee on Rules  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Smith Warner, Vice-Chairs Drazan and Holvey, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the YWCA of Greater Portland, I am writing to express our support for HB 2366, which allows persons convicted of a felony to register to vote, update voter registration and vote in elections while incarcerated.

As one of the oldest and largest women's organizations in the nation, with 2.6 million members across 300 local associations, the YWCA of Greater Portland has been serving Oregonians for over 110 years, while evolving to meet the changing needs of the women we serve. However, our core mission has not changed: eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, dignity and freedom for all.

One of our five key areas of work is the Family Preservation Project at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. The Family Preservation Project provides services to help incarcerated women and their children overcome cycles of poverty, trauma, and intergenerational involvement in the criminal justice system. All of the incarcerated women that we work with through FPP will re-enter society and research has found that maintaining family connectivity is the single best predictor of post-incarceration success for women. We also know that strong community ties and civic engagement are known to increase the ability to reintegrate, reduce re-offending, and make communities safer. At the core, representation matters and incarcerated individuals deserve to have their voices heard when decisions are being made, especially when we are talking about incarcerated women who are disproportionately members of the BIPOC community. Restoring the right to vote for incarcerated Oregonians would be a historic step toward eliminating laws that are rooted in white supremacy and have no correlation to public safety.

Please support HB 2366.

Thank you,

*Susan A. Stoltenberg*  
Susan Stoltenberg  
CEO, YWCA of Greater Portland

*Jessica Katz*  
Jessica Katz  
Director, Family Preservation Project

eliminating  
empowering  
**ywca**  
of greater portland

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