



## Testimony in support of SB 571 – allowing incarcerated citizens to vote

When incarcerated Oregonians return to our communities, as almost all do, we want them to successfully reintegrate into society and become productive and law-abiding citizens. This would be good for both the formerly incarcerated individual and the community. Success will be more likely if a prisoner kept good connections with family and loved ones, had educational and job-training opportunities, and stayed interested in what was going on in the outside world. Being able to vote would be a good way to retain or to develop interest in and connection with the community and the state that the individual will be returning to.

Maine and Vermont never took away prisoners' right to vote. Oregon should join them. There is no logical reason why a criminal conviction should interfere with a citizen's right to vote, except perhaps a voter-fraud conviction. People who commit crimes have a right to many things (food, shelter, safety, medical care, mail, books, etc), so why not the vote? Citizens still fulfilling their criminal sentence outside prison walls can automatically restore their vote; now let's take the next step.

Oregon is the perfect state to do this since we have universal vote-by-mail and it is no burden to simply send and receive ballots just like is done with any other registered voter.

The only difference would be that their current mailing address would be different from their registration address, which would be the last community address at which they resided.

Oregon is a leader in many things. Let's do this!