

Voting in Jails PDX

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Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and members of the committee,

Voting in Jails PDX is a group of Oregonians that advocates for the voting rights of people who are currently incarcerated in Oregon County jails. We are dedicated to registering people who are incarcerated in Oregon County jails to vote and ensuring they can cast their vote in an equal and streamlined manner, with the same sense of safety and opportunity as every other Oregon voter. Voting in Jails PDX overwhelmingly supports Senate Bill 571. Voting is a fundamental right; each individual has a voice in their community, and those who are incarcerated in Oregon County jails and prisons are very much still a part of our community.

Voting in Jails PDX strongly urges you to focus on Section 5 of this bill. Voting in Jails PDX has worked through two election cycles with those incarcerated in Multnomah County Jails, who have the right to vote under ORS 137.281. The lack of implementation of an established voting procedure while incarcerated in Oregon has proven to be a major and consistent barrier in involving this eligible group in a free and fair election process. We fear the same barrier will persist if Senate Bill 571 is not implemented properly if passed.

Voting in Jails PDX looks forward to continuing to engage with this committee as Senate Bill 571 moves through the process, and we would be eager to answer any questions or concerns that you may have regarding our work and our experience thus far.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Voting in Jails PDX