

I'm writing to express my support for the bill to restore voting rights to citizens currently serving prison sentences. Citizenship is not a right that expires upon misbehavior. Depriving people of this most basic of civil rights, the right to cast a ballot, makes it less likely that they will ever successfully reintegrate to society. The purpose of prison is to rehabilitate people. We can't expect prisoners to be deprived of all rights and then emerge from prison ready to use them well.

Further, prisoners are no more or less inherently rational than anyone allowed to vote, and there is no safety or security risk in allowing incarcerated people to vote. Instead, permitting Oregonians in prison to vote would help strengthen their connection to their communities and wider society, to which most of them will one day return. This makes for smoother transitions post-incarceration and benefits ex-prisoners and their communities alike.