

YES on SB 571/HB 2366

Restoring voting rights to Oregonians in prison.

Why should people in prison be able to vote?

Ninety-five percent of people in prison return to their communities. Reentry can be a difficult process, but having strong ties to the community increases the chances of success. Civic engagement, specifically voting, increases the ability to reintegrate, reducing recidivism, and making communities safer.

Due to disproportionate rates of incarceration, Black, Latinx, and young people are disenfranchised at much higher rates.

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“Prison is about the loss of liberty, not the loss of citizenship.”

Anthony Richardson,
Adult in Custody

The lives of people in prison are influenced by policies made by elected officials. Those who are elected are held accountable by their constituents. Until people in prison are given the right to vote, making up the constituency, they are unable to hold elected officials accountable.

People in prison have families on the outside. 75% of women in Oregon prisons are mothers. The families of those in prison are impacted by the decisions made by elected officials; therefore, people in prison should be able to influence the electoral process.

We can't overlook the intersection of veterans and people experiencing incarceration. 8.5% of people incarcerated in Oregon are veterans. Their voice is important and their vote is needed. Democracy works better when more people are involved.

The right to vote is only taken away from Oregonians while they are incarcerated in a state prison. The removal of voting rights should not be connected to punishment. The removal of voting rights is civic death and an affront to civil liberties.

Who is in prison?

12,989 people are incarcerated in Oregon prisons.¹

9% of incarcerated people are Black, whereas Black people are 2% of the state's residents.²

8.5% are veterans.³

75% of women incarcerated in Oregon are mothers.⁴

27% of people in Oregon prisons are aged 30 and under, and the average age of incarcerated Oregonians is 40 years old.⁵

Sources: ¹Oregon DOC Adults in Custody Population Profile for 12/01/2020. ²Ibid. ³Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs. ⁴"Women in Prison" Oregon Justice Resource Center. ⁵Oregon DOC Quick Facts.

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“I don't see a downside to this, quite honestly... Oregon is so committed to expanding voting rights and expanding democracy, and that principle is so ingrained in Oregonians on both sides of the aisle.”

Representative
Andrea Salinas

Frequently Asked Questions

Where would people in prison be registered to vote?

At their most recent address at the time of conviction, or in the county where they were processed.

Does this change require a constitutional amendment?

No. Oregon's Constitution prohibits people in prison from voting *unless otherwise provided by law*. So, we are making a statutory change which requires a simple majority vote.

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“Individuals who commit crimes need to be held accountable, but they should not be stripped of their rights as a citizen...As a citizen, they should have the continued right to vote and have a say in their government, even if they are incarcerated.”

Senator Floyd Prozanski

Can this be implemented?

Yes. Oregon leads the nation with vote by mail, automatic voter registration, paid postage, and is the easiest state to vote in. The same systems and logic can easily be applied to prisons. This change just takes a simple majority to make, and restores voting rights to incarcerated Oregonians.

Maine, Vermont, and the District of Columbia allow incarcerated people to vote. Over 20 states are considering making this change, and Oregon can lead the way.

Questions?

Contact Chief Sponsor Representative Andrea Salinas at rep.andreasalinas@oregonlegislature.gov.

Organizations in support

