

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee,

I ask that you support senate bill SB 571 to restore voting rights to incarcerated people. It's long past due to strike from the books the practice of stripping the right to vote from people in prison. Let's do away with this holdover from the Jim Crow era.

People incarcerated want to participate in the political landscape of our society. Things they vote on will impact their loved ones in the community that they are returning to.

Incarcerated people should not have to surrender their sacred right to participate in our democracy at the prison door. As Anthony Richardson, a currently incarcerated person, so eloquently stated, "Prison is about the loss of liberty, not the loss of citizenship."

This law disproportionately targets Black, Indigenous and other people of color. Black, Latinx and young people are incarcerated at a higher rate than their white, older peers, so naturally the effects of voting disenfranchisement has a cascade effect.

We also can't ignore how incarceration intersects with our veterans, who make up 8.5% of people incarcerated in Oregon. Stripping the voting rights of people who have voluntarily risked their lives to uphold our precious democracy is especially egregious and perfectly demonstrates how unfair it is.

Passing this law will demonstrate that Oregon elected officials are serious about progressing anti-racist legislation. So please pass this law as soon as possible.

Thank you,
Jackie Whitt