

GUARANTEERING THE RIGHT TO VOTE

12,000 OREGONIANS ARE DENIED THE RIGHT TO VOTE

All Oregonians should have a say in what happens in their community, and a voice in their government. The right to vote is enshrined in our constitution and fundamental to a vibrant and participatory democracy. But many incarcerated Oregonians are currently denied their right to vote, leading to low-income, Black, Indigenous, and Latinx people being disproportionately disenfranchised. To realize the promise of democracy and address significant racial inequities, Oregon must guarantee the right to vote for people impacted by the criminal legal system.

Ensure successful integration back into our communities

95% of people in prison will return to their communities.¹ Study after study has shown that successful re-entry greatly reduces the likelihood of people returning to prison — that includes ensuring people can become engaged and active in their communities. Guaranteeing the right to vote keeps people involved in their communities and makes our communities safer.

Address unjust impacts of mass incarceration

Due to biases and inequities in our criminal legal system, low-income, Black, Indigenous, and people of color are more likely to be incarcerated and denied the right to vote. For many people, life after prison means partial citizenship. As we work to reimagine our criminal legal system, one of the first changes we can make is to restore voting rights to people who are most impacted by that system: those inside prisons.

Voting is a right and civic responsibility

Voting is a right that cannot and should not be taken away from any citizen. No matter your race, area code, or income, every Oregonian should have an equal say in what happens in our state and our community. Denying Oregonians the ability to vote not only denies them a right, but it denies them the ability to fulfill their civic responsibility to our democracy.

Guaranteeing the Right to Vote addresses significant racial inequities, fulfills the promise of our democracy, and improves public safety and community wellbeing for all.

This is why we are working to pass historic legislation that will ensure every incarcerated Oregonian can:

- Register to vote
- Update their voter registration
- Vote in elections based on where they resided prior to incarceration

“The right to engage in our democracy by voting is a fundamental right of the people in Oregon and the United States. The removal of voting rights should not be connected to punishment. It is civic death and an affront to civil liberties. By restoring the right to vote for incarcerated Oregonians, we advance our democratic values and recognize incarcerated Oregonians as fellow citizens with inherent value and dignity.”

Sandy Chung
Executive Director of the
ACLU Oregon

ACLU
Oregon

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

Anthony Richardson
Adult in Custody

Our coalition has the support of over 40 civil rights, faith-based and community based organizations, as well as dozens of currently and formerly incarcerated people.

