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Chair Bowman and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 2250, an important piece of legislation that will ensure that the population data reported in the census for purposes of redistricting accurately reflects the residence status of incarcerated individuals before their incarceration and help in fairer apportionment of legislative districts, congressional districts, and boundaries for public bodies.

This bill addresses the “Prison Gerrymandering” Issue. Incarcerated individuals are often counted as residents of the county or district in which they are incarcerated, rather than the county or district where they resided before incarceration. This distorts the true population counts in certain districts and can lead to the disproportionate allocation of political power. HB 2250 addresses this issue by requiring the adjustment of census data to reflect the actual residence status of incarcerated individuals, ensuring more equitable representation.

HB 2250 is a crucial step toward ensuring more accurate, fair, and equitable representation in Oregon’s political and public service systems. By correcting the way we count incarcerated individuals, we are not only addressing an issue of statistical accuracy, but we are also reinforcing the democratic values of fairness and equal representation for all Oregonians.

I urge the committee to support HB 2250 and help ensure that our redistricting processes are grounded in equity.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Elsie Elling

Political and Policy Strategist

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