

Voting While Incarcerated
SB579, HB4147 2023 Session
HB 3785 2025 Session
Talking Points

This document is from the 2021 Session and has only been updated to reflect the new bill number.

- 95-97% of these people return to the communities in which they previously resided. They are already disconnected from their community. Voting while incarcerated will keep them better connected and can make their transition back into the community easier.
- A study by Sentencing Project shows that voting can even reduce recidivism. Those who vote are less likely to return to prison.
- A commitment to racial justice requires acknowledgement that people of color are disproportionately incarcerated, thus disproportionately affecting voter rates. The only reparation for this is reinstating their full voting rights.
- Philosophically, consider Oregon's belief in democracy for all. These people deserve representation, deserve their voices to be heard. They will be living under the laws set up by their representatives so they should have the right to vote for those representatives.
- Some of the incarcerated felons are property owners, taxpayers, and/or have children in public schools. They deserve the same right to vote, especially since some of the issues on the ballot directly affect them.
- Too many of us see those imprisoned through stereotypic memes. Many people in prison are thoughtful, caring human beings. Imprisoned people have themselves been victims of childhood trauma. Allowing them to vote can help restore their sense of humanity.
- Imprisoned people can see the government as the enemy. The civic engagement involved by voting changes that dynamic.
- This bill has the support of a broad coalition of advocacy groups. For example, Next Up <https://nextuporegon.org/>, Oregon Justice Resource Center <https://ojrc.info/>, NARAL [NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon](#), ACLU [ACLU of Oregon](#), APANO [APANO | Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon](#), Oregon UU Voices

for Justice [Deepening Democracy](#), Trish Garner (State Public Policy Chair) for American Association of University Women of Oregon, Sunrise PDX, OASIS, Beyond These Walls, and others