



DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF LANE COUNTY

To: Oregon Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation
From: Chris Wig, Chair, Democratic Party of Lane County, and Charlie Swanson, Platform Committee Chair of the Democratic Party of Lane County
Re: Support for SJM 2 – calls for U.S. Constitutional Amendment to remove exemption on prohibition of slavery and involuntary servitude

February 23, 2021

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee,

We are writing on behalf of the more than 106,000 Democrats in Lane County to urge you to support SJM 2, which calls on Congress to eliminate the exemption on the prohibition of slavery and involuntary servitude in our nation. Involuntary servitude has been allowed as a punishment for crime, an allowance that has long been used to ill effect, and is part of the systemic racism in our country.

It is time to remove this exemption. It has for far too long been used to effectively enslave people, especially blacks, who are incarcerated at much higher rates than others. There are great benefits to providing work opportunities to those who are incarcerated, but there is no need to make those opportunities mandatory. Work programs can easily be made enticing enough to attract those who would benefit from them. Neither society nor those who are forced into working are likely to benefit from a mandatory program.

Slavery and involuntary servitude should have no place in the U.S. constitution, except as something that is prohibited.

We look forward to you urging Congress to make this appropriate change to our Constitution.

Sincerely,

Chris Wig
Chair of the Democratic Party of Lane County

Charlie Swanson
Chair of the Platform Committee of the Democratic Party of Lane County