



To: Members of the Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation
From: Sponsors, Inc.
Date: February 24, 2021
Re: Support for SB 571

Members of the Committee,
On behalf of Sponsors, I write to you in support of Senate Bill 571.

Sponsors, Inc., is a national leader in the delivery of Reentry services. We offer a broad range of services—case management, employment assistance, housing, mental health services and mentoring—that people need in order to be successful upon returning to their community.

Representation matters and in the United States representation is determined by those who vote. We have, as a country, established that the right to vote is an inalienable and universal principle that applies to all American citizens 18 years and older.

As a right of citizenship voting should not be connected to punishment for criminal offenses. Disenfranchising a specific group of people undermines democracy, with a disproportionate impact on people of color due to the racial disparities in our unjust carceral system.

Oregon leads the country in access to voting for people with conviction histories, we do not restrict the right to vote for individuals who have completed their sentence or are on parole or probation. 34 other states have far more restrictive policies disenfranchising people with conviction histories. Right now, we have the opportunity to be a leader, again, in expanding voting access and creating the opportunity for all citizens to have representation and a say in the workings of our state.

However, despite being a leader in access to voting overall and for people post-prison or jail, the Sentencing Project estimates that approximately 15,000 Oregonians remain ineligible to vote. Because we restrict the right to vote for people in our correctional facilities. This is a significant number of people to be unable to have a say in our representative Democracy.

Treating people who are serving their sentences in our correctional facilities as full citizens is a moral imperative and is legislation that ought to pass this session. We urge your full support of this effort to pass SB 571.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Solomon", written in a cursive style.

Paul Solomon
Executive Director, Sponsors, Inc.