



To: Members of the House Committee on Rules

From: Sponsors, Inc.

Submitted by Morgen Jaco & Paul Solomon, Co-Executive Directors

Date: February 14, 2023

Re. Support for HB 2107

We write to you today in support of HB 2107.

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

Representation matters, especially in the United States where representation is decided by those who vote. Our constitution guarantees free elections, equal protection under the law, and freedom of speech. Voting is also fundamental to our rights and freedom as Oregonians.

Approximately 95% of incarcerated people will re-enter society after completing their sentence looking to work jobs, raise families, and pay taxes in their communities. This bill contains two provisions which are important for successful re-entry:

- 1) Providing individuals with a state identification card
- 2) Automatically enrolling these people as voters

Without valid state identification, people can experience difficulty applying for employment, government benefits, renting an apartment, booking a hotel room or buying a car. Each year, more than 600,000 people¹ are released from state and federal prisons and many times these people reentering society do not have the

¹ Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) is the principal advisor to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, <https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/human-services/incarceration-reentry-0>

opportunity or means to obtain important identification documents.

Approximately 14 states have laws that provide people coming out of state prison with a state identification card or driver license, either at release or immediately following, Oregon is not one of them.

Connecting the provision of state ID with access to automatic voter registration allows people to be more fully involved in their communities, and increases the success of reintegration when they come back.

Oregon leads the country in access to voting, creating a pilot program for people returning to their communities from Powder Ridge Correctional Institution will both increase civic engagement and provide people with a much needed resource, a state ID, critical for accessing services and opportunities.