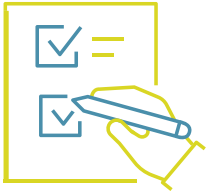


HB 2030 FREE THE VOTE ACT

Sponsor: Rep. Tarra Simmons



The right to vote affirms our humanity, our voice, and our identity as Americans. But Washington's prisons strip more than 14,000 voters of their most fundamental right as citizens. Our current law allows our state to take your voting rights away for "infamous crimes," which lawmakers have used to silence people with felony convictions. By officially defining "infamous crimes" as crimes punishable by the death penalty (now outlawed in WA, except in cases of treason), we can join the three other US states that allow everyone to make their voice heard, even while incarcerated.

- **Every citizen should have the freedom to vote.** Voting is a fundamental right. People in prison are our community members, citizens, and human beings. They are counted in the census, participate in work and education, and are subject to systems that they have no say in - they should have an equal voice like any other citizen.
- **Voting sets people up for success after prison.** Most of us agree that prison should be a more restorative place where people can learn to be better neighbors. Voting helps people stay connected to their communities and lowers their likelihood of returning to prison.
- **Denying the vote has roots in racism.** Criminal disenfranchisement laws were introduced to deny the freedom to vote to Black and Brown people. Like outlawed racist practices like poll taxes, literacy tests, and grandfather clauses, prison disenfranchisement silences Black, Indigenous, and lower-income voters.
- **Our representatives must be accountable to all of us.** The lives of people in prison are highly affected by policies made by elected officials. If people in prison are allowed to vote, people in power will finally be held accountable to addressing their unique struggles and mistreatment.
- **Incarcerated voters are a huge part of our diverse community.** Incarceration impacts people of all walks of life and all political parties: almost half of all Americans have an immediate family member who has been incarcerated.
- **Voting in prison is a widely accepted and successful policy.** Many other democracies around the world and multiple US states (Maine, Vermont, Puerto Rico, D.C) allow voting in prison.

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Free the Vote.
WASHINGTON