

HB 1146

BALLOT ACCESS IN JAILS

PROBLEM:

We believe every citizen should be able to exercise their freedom to vote, no matter their race, income, or circumstances. However, our state has historically neglected ballot access for people in jails.

Almost all Washingtonians are eligible to vote in jail, but may lack access to the internet, mailing services, and critical voting information that most other citizens enjoy. As a result, the people most impacted by public policies are locked out of a say in the decisions that affect their lives.

BILL SUMMARY:

HB 1146 will require that jails provide people the basic supports they need to exercise their freedom to vote, including:

- Access to the voter's pamphlet and voter registration forms
- Visible voter information in general population areas and/or on tablets
- Private areas to fill out a ballot
- Permission for election officials to access jails at least 30 days before elections for outreach and education
- Plans for election officials to get ballots to voters in jail during the voting period
- Designated jail voting coordinators among jail staff and within auditor's offices
- Requirements to collect data and report on jail voting progress after elections
- Requirements to document requests and complaints from voters in jails

HB 1146 will ensure that every voter has equal voice and power in society, including BIPOC and lower-income voters that are disadvantaged by our criminal legal system. HB 1146 empowers us to shape a more free, just, and prosperous future through civic engagement.

Contact: Free The Vote WA | freethevote.wa.org

info@WaVotingJustice.org