

# Voting Rights Restoration

Washington currently prohibits people living in the community from voting just because they have a past conviction. HB 2992/SB 6228 (2020) will strengthen our democracy, increase public safety, and promote racial justice by automatically restoring the right to vote for everyone living in the community.

## Restoring voting rights to everyone in the community...

- **Ensures our democracy is truly representational.** We can't have a fully functional democracy if we bar community members from voting. Yet today as many as 10,000 Washingtonians who are home, working, paying taxes, going to school, and contributing to their communities can't vote just because of a past conviction. Restoring voting rights would allow everyone in the community to have a say over the issues that shape their lives.
- **Advances civil rights and racial justice.** Because of racial bias in the criminal legal system, Black/African American and Indigenous Washingtonians are more likely than others to be convicted of crimes and lose their right to vote. Restoring voting rights would help address racial inequities created by Washington's current law.
- **Leads to stronger and safer communities.** Denying the right to vote to Washingtonians living in the community serves no legitimate law enforcement purpose. [Research](#) has shown that when people are civically engaged and have a stake in their community, they are less likely to be re-arrested. Restoring voting rights would improve public safety while also giving the people most impacted by our state's criminal legal system a chance to improve it by participating in civic life.
- **Is supported by a broad coalition that includes:**
  - Reentry groups
  - Survivor groups
  - Bipartisan lawmakers
  - Law enforcement officials
  - Criminal justice experts
  - Faith and civil rights groups
- **Is consistent with the policy of 20 states, both red and blue, and Washington, D.C.** California, Oregon, Indiana, and Ohio, are among the 20 states that already allow everyone living in the community to vote. Adding Washington to that list would bring the state in line with the rest of the West Coast.
- **Is easy to understand and administer, resolving the confusion surrounding the current policy.** Washington's law has caused confusion among everyone from election officials to prospective voters themselves about who is eligible to vote. If every citizen living in the community can vote, officials have a bright line rule to apply, making it easier to determine who is eligible to vote.

**WHO WE ARE:** The Washington State Voting Rights Restoration Coalition is a community of people and organizations who are seeking justice for our families and neighbors impacted by our criminal legal system. We are a coalition that supports the restoration of voting rights to those formerly incarcerated in order to support their successful reintegration into our community. Our priorities align with our core values and thus we are committed to supporting legislation that aligns with our collective values of humanity, empowerment, racial equity, inclusion, and a free Democracy.

## Washington State Voting Rights Restoration Coalition

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