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**From:** ariel [mailto:ariel@johncom.com.au]

**Sent:** Wednesday, 1 March 2006 9:05 AM

**To:** FPA, Committee (SEN)

**Subject:** Removing prisoners' right to vote: Electoral and Referendum (etc) Bill

I believe that prisoners should have as much right to vote as the next person and that, before doing so, they should be kept informed of who is running for office and what their policies are. As far as I can make out, the people currently affected most by the proposed change in law - prisoners - have not been informed of the proposed changes nor have their views been sought.

I hope the Committee will communicate with prisoners immediately and facilitate their responses.

The reasons why I believe all prisoners should have the right to vote however long they are in for:

1. Whether we like it or not prisoners are part of our society
2. Many of these will come out within 5, 10 or 15 years.
3. Perhaps if they vote they will feel responsible and part of the democratic (a process they are unlikely to find happening in prison...)
4. if voting is compulsory for all Australians, aren't they adding to their misdemeanours by not voting?? or are they not Australians? or what?

On the other hand maybe there are many who would rather not vote if they are going to get representation like that of Gary Nairn quoted below:

*If you've done something to society that warrants a custodial sentence then you know, really, you shouldn't be able in to have some say in the elected officials, who are there legislating and making the laws that that particular person's been flouting.*

*ABC RN - AM program 25/02/06*

From my point of view a number of currently serving politicians should be behind bars, not only for their corrupt behaviour (for which lesser people would have been condemned by more than rhetoric) but also precisely because they are guilty of violence against sections of the population (having passed the Welfare to Work and Workplace Relations legislation). Finally, I wonder how many people are in prison because voting is compulsory and they didn't vote and couldn't pay the fine?!

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